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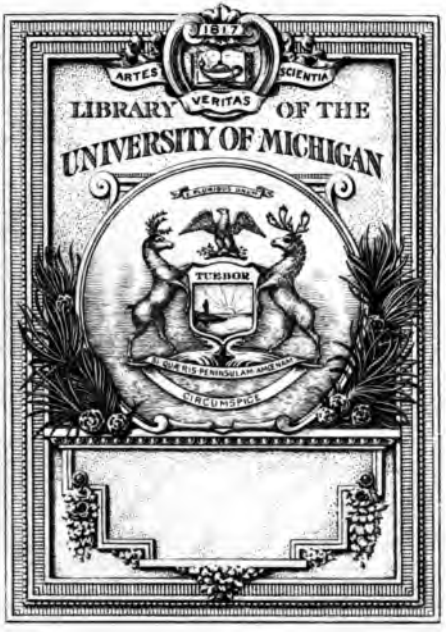
MAURICE HEWLETT

BY MILTON BRONNER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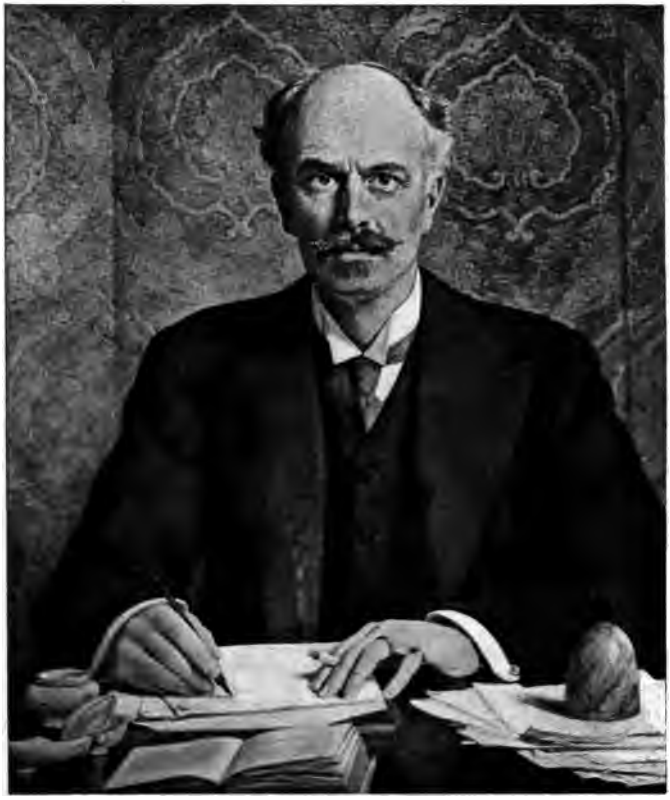

Maurice Hewlett

MAURICE HEWLETT

BEING A CRITICAL REVIEW OF HIS PROSE AND POETRY

BY MILTON BRONNER,

AUTHOR OF "LETTERS FROM THE RAVEN"

BOSTON, JOHN W. LUCE AND COMPANY, MCMX

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TO

MY FATHER

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A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

THERE are very few writers of today, who have produced so much fine work, concerning whom so little is known as in the case of Mr. Maurice Hewlett. The literary journals have been singularly free from the gossip so usual in the case of an author whose books have come to be recognized as events of more than ordinary importance. The reticence of the man is best summed up in his own modest words:

"I have refused to give journalists any details of my personal history or private circumstances, because I felt that they were trading upon mere notoriety and proposing to feed the public with what was not good for it—even if it had an appetite. The business of critics, is to criticise a writer as such, and not help out his esthetic with facts which have really nothing to do with the maker. I could write novels with one eye quite as well as I could with two."

To a certain extent, of course, Mr. Hew-

lett is correct in his attitude. But there are certain things concerning an author which it is perfectly legitimate to know. It helps the reader and student to reach a just conclusion, when he knows something about the family history, the education, and the tastes of the author under consideration.

"Who's Who," that friend of the busy editor, does very little to satisfy this legitimate curiosity. One will find scores of lesser authors more fully treated than the subject of this book. Here is what it tells:—"Maurice Henry Hewlett: Keeper of Land Revenue Records and Enrolments, 1896-1900; born, January 22, 1861; eldest son of Henry Gay Hewlett of Shaw Hill, Addington, Kent; married Hilda Beatrice, second daughter of Rev. George William Herbert. Educated, London International College, Spring Grove, Isleworth. Barrister, 1891. Publications: "Earthwork Out of Tuscany," 1895; "The Masque of Dead Florentines," 1895; "Songs and Meditations," 1897; "The Forest Lovers," 1898; "Pan and the Young Shepherd," 1898; "Little Novels of Italy," 1899; "Richard Yea and Nay," 1900; "New Canterbury Tales," 1901; "The Queen's Quair," 1904; "The Road in Tuscany," 1904;

"Fond Adventures," 1905; "The Fool Errant," 1905; "The Stooping Lady," 1907.

If to this, are added "The Spanish Jade" and "Halfway House," 1908; "Artemision" and "Open Country," 1909, the list is complete.

Mr. Hewlett is in many ways English of the English. The family had land in the borders of Somerset and Dorset for many centuries. In fact, there is a person by the name of Hewlett mentioned in the Domesday Book of Somerset as holding land there and as having held it in the time of Edward the Confessor. It was a great grandfather of the novelist who left the country and settled in London. So far back as it has been possible to trace, the Hewletts have always been Puritans and Whigs. Mr. Hewlett's grandparents were strictly so. His father fell under the influence of Dr. Martineau and called himself nothing more definite than a theist. Mr. Hewlett's grandmother was one of the Gays of Norfolk, a Huguenot French family. His father bore the name, Henry Gay Hewlett, and it is not a little curious that in the novelist's first great popular success, "The Forest Lovers," the hero bore the name Prosper le Gai.

MAURICE HEWLETT

Henry Gay Hewlett, the father of the novelist, was a student all his life, a writer of verses, and a critic of no mean ability. It is with no little interest that one picks up the Contemporary Review, of December, 1874 to read a critique by H. G. Hewlett upon the poems of William Morris. One can readily believe that a precocious boy, such as the novelist is said to have been, would be intensely interested in the magazine contributions by his father. The elder Hewlett, no less than the present one, was interested in medieval topics. It was this, doubtless, which caused the poems of Morris to appeal to him, at the same time that he deprecated the poems of Swinburne, so savagely flayed in the same magazine by Robert Buchanan.

Maurice Henry Hewlett, the eldest son of a large family of children, must have been remarked early as one apt to follow in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, both of whom were students of black letter law. As early as the family can remember, Maurice Hewlett began to read and to scribble. The first book which he was noticed reading was significantly enough the "Morte D'Artur. At one time he knew it by heart and it un-

doubtedly had an influence not only upon his future style, but upon his future studies. Somewhere Mr. Hewlett says that he read Shakespeare very early, "Tom Jones" too early, and French when he was fourteen. He read practically no poetry until he was 25. As the net result of his reading, he has given it as his opinion that his literary sponsoring was Mallory, the Bible, Quixote in English, Sir Thomas Browne and Carlyle. The poets who influenced his style were Keats, Shelly, Dante and the Italians of Dante's time. The lad was educated largely in private schools. School life, as such, was not much to his taste and he cared little for the ordinary routine lessons. He ended his student days without a university degree. He says of this time of his life: "I wasted my time, I dreamed; I tried to do things too big for me, and threw them up at the first failure; I diligently pursued every false God; I don't think I was very happy, and I am sure I was very disagreeable; I doubt now if I was ever a boy, except for a short period when by rights I should have been a man."

While he was dreaming and reading, he was also writing by fits and starts. As a lad he

was supposed by his fond family to be able to imitate anybody. It is recorded of him that he once greatly surprised a lady who invited him to a young folks' croquet party, by responding in Latin in the style of a letter in Sallust or Livy. He was about 15 at the time and with something like enthusiasm for Latin. Later on he copied the manner of Plato and at the age of 18 began the study of law, but took his time about it, not being finally called to the bar until 1891. By then, he was not only thoroughly acquainted with law itself—a fondness for which shows itself in his novels—not only familiar with English and French literature, but had begun that study of Italian which was to become such a passion with him. About this time he fell ill and took those brief trips abroad which were so largely to affect his subsequent career. Contrary to the generally accepted opinion, the longest visit he has ever paid Italy was but of two months duration. Upon his return in better health, he began the practice of his profession. Fitly enough, he lectured on medieval thought and art at the South Kensington University College and wrote reviews for the critical journals upon subjects

which were congenial to him. As a reviewer he was by no means gentle. The same honesty of purpose which has led him to call a spade a spade in his novels, led him to pursue a similar course in his reviewing work. It is only necessary to take one example: In 1896, the year after his "Earthwork" and the year in which he secured a position in the Treasury Department, Vernon Lee, a well known writer on aesthetic subjects, issued a book entitled "Renaissance Fancies and Studies." It so happens that Miss Violet Paget (Vernon Lee) is rather unappreciative of Botticelli, one of Mr. Hewlett's heroes. This stirs him to some vigourous writing in his review in the Academy of March 21, 1896, one interesting passage being as follows: "Her chapter on Imaginative Art in the Renaissance, for instance, proceeds upon a fallacy. A thing is not imaginative because you get imaginative stimulus out of it. The imaginative man needs much less than a Giottesque fresco to set his soul traveling. Indeed, one would be inclined to say that imagination was most nourished by the work it had to do, by the need to fend for itself. * * * A child will ride to heaven on a broomstick; but the broom-

stick does not take him. He, on the contrary, takes the broomstick."

The rest of Mr. Hewlett's career since the success of his "Forest Lovers" and his resignation from the Land Revenue office is simply one of literary work, his time being engaged in the production of his novels.

Died, 15 June, 1923

EARTHWORK OUT OF TUSCANY.

THERE is an apocryphal story concerning Whistler which runs something like this: A slight acquaintance brought up a friend whom he wished to present to the great painter.

"Mr. Whistler, this is Mr. Smith."

"I don't care," replied Whistler as he moved away.

Presumably some of the I-don't-care-to-know-you spirit possessed the critics at the time Mr. Hewlett's first book—"Earthwork Out of Tuscany"—appeared. A notice in the Athenaeum of June 15, 1895 is representative of the reception accorded the book by the critics:

" 'Earthwork Out of Tuscany,' by Maurice Hewlett (Dent & Company) will not, we fear, appeal to many readers. Mr. Hewlett writes mainly of Florence, a city that has been 'more written about' than any out of Italy, excepting Cairo. His impressions and trans-

lations are not interesting, and his style is frequently affected and disagreeable. The best that can be said of the book is that it shows a very proper sympathy with much that is good in art; but this will not make the book a good one. In one place the author modestly speaks of his writings as watered wine, and we must confess his modesty is not unbecoming."

Today the weight of Maurice Hewlett's name would doubtless cause the most cocksure of his critics to pause before dismissing a book, from his hand, in any such cavalier fashion; while even the dullest of them would recall that the spell of Italy has whistled off the creative imagination of every man of letters who has breathed her air. To each she has given some secret of her soul, though to no two of them has the same whispered message of enchantment come.

Italy to Byron represented the land where a Lucretia Borgia wrote, "the prettiest love letters in the world" to Cardinal Bembo, and he heartily wished himself a Cardinal. To Shelley, it meant Milan with its cathedral and a quiet corner in it where he could read his Dante. Heine, creating figures of women and

falling in love with his fictions, wrote of one Italian city: "It seemed to me as though the whole town was nought else than a pretty novel that I had once read—that, in truth, I myself had created; and that I was bewitched by my own phantasy, startled by the pictures of my own conjuring."

To Landor, Italy meant that country in which the little Assunta went bargaining for the best olives, and where Petrarch and Boccaccio learnedly discussed the merits and defects of Dante's work.

To Pater, it meant a place where a few great painters had created masterpieces. In our day, it means to Mr. Arthur Symons a country filled with cities that are, as it were, dead cities, cities to be considered as works of art, whereas Mr. Hewlett considers them as works of life. To Mr. Symons, people are non-existent, or, if they "intrude," are a source of annoyance.

To Mr. Hewlett, no city is complete without its visions of the people who made it. The landscape is not perfect without its appealing human figures. Italy, as he aptly says in one place, is a country in which pictures were lived.

He recreates that old Italy for us. The brilliancy with which he does this, the sureness of his touch, the deep knowledge of land, people and history that he displays, the intimacy of his revelations, stamp him, not as the Anglo-Saxon writing of Italy as Browning did, as George Eliot did, but as the most Italianate of Englishmen.

His first book smacks somewhat of Pater and Bourget, with a little of Lamb and of Sir Thomas Browne, but to many there is more of the Ruskin of the "Mornings in Florence" in it, than of any of the authors mentioned; revealed not so much in the style of the English, as in the manner in which he approaches Italy, the joy he has in the works of art that please him, the good humour it puts him in to write of it. As not the least charming part of the "Mornings in Florence" is the humourous little preface, so not the least delightful portion of the "Earthwork" is the sunny, light-hearted "Proem," an "apologia pro libello suo":—"You take a boy out of school; you set him to book-reading, give him Shakespeare and a Bible, set him sailing in the air with the poets; drench him with painter's dreams, *via,* Titian's carmine and orange, Ver-

onese's rippling brocades, Umbrian morning skies, and Tuscan hues wrought of moonbeams and flowing water—anon you turn him adrift in Italy, a country where all poets' souls seem to be caged in crystal and set in the sun, and say, 'Here, dreamer of dreams, what of the day?' Madonna! You ask and you shall obtain. I proceed to expand under your benevolent eye."

Proceeding, he gives a criticism of some painter's work; he exercises his ingenuity in discussing poetry of the 15th century and translating a stave or two; possibly with Landor in mind, he constructs one or two imaginary conversations; he gives a romantic interpretation of what sculptures mean to him, and finally two well-nigh perfect little things: "Quattrocentisteria," and "A Sacrifice at Prato," which is equally artistic in another vein, recalling to mind by its sunny paganism certain golden pages in Pater's "Marius." And all these things are written with such gaiety of spirit one finds it hard to realize that the author was not 21 but 33. The sun has gone to the head of this sun-worshipper. Everything is attractive to him in this sun-soaked Tuscany.

"I may see my mistress Italy embowered in a belfry, a fresco, the scope of a Piazza, the lilt of a Stornello, the fragrance of a legend. If I don't find a legend to hand I may, as lief as not, invent one."

This sun-intoxicated writer is not of the order of the aesthetes. He flouts at the suggestion that "Art is some pale, remote virgin who must needs shiver and withdraw at the touch of actual life." To him the very foundation of all great art is that it springs from actual life; it is earthiness touched to ethereality, to loveliness supreme, to sublimity by the power of genius. He uses his common sense. In considering a work of art he asks is it well done, rather than is it well intentioned? He does not hesitate to break a lance with Mr. George Moore or with Ruskin himself, when needs must. He will not scruple to say that Ruskin's interpretation of Botticelli's Judith is all wrong and boldly tell the story he himself reads in this fine work. And as he does, there drop such melodious bits as this: "Here, on the weather-fretted walls, a Della Robbia blossoms out in natural colours—blue and white and green. They are Spring's colours. You need not go into

the Bargello to understand Luca and Andrea at their happy task; as well go into a botanical museum to read the secret of April."

Mr. Hewlett has called this a book about Tuscany. Coming still closer to the fact, it might be said it is about Botticelli.

Botticelli the man, Botticelli the artist, and, possibly, Botticelli the actor in various little life-dramas,—these are the main topics of his book. The painter's career is almost an obsession with Mr. Hewlett. He reverts to it again and again. He even promises to write at length some day a Botticelli story, a promise thus far not kept.

A glimpse of Botticelli is caught in the first of Mr. Hewlett's "conversations," "Of Sheep Shearers," a little thing that presupposes more knowledge of Florentine art and history than the average reader is apt to possess. Yet, in the second line, there is such a sentence as this, etching an entire picture: "The little wistful mother spying for God in her first born."

In the mouth of Luca Signorelli, Hewlett has placed words that give the very attitude with which the great painter was met in his own day: "'Tis a dreamer, sir, believe me,

a dreamer of virgin nights, who knows not the oracle of a tense muscle nor the right equivalent of a hairy chest. His gods are of the cloister, and his goddesses have the vapours of a long-legged girl belated in the nursery; they are all for your tremors and swoonings, your lingering, fingering embracements of bosom friends. Aphroditissa! Bones of me, shall Aphrodite languish in a skimpy skirt!"

Then follow two dramatic conversations in which are brief glimpses of Simonetta, beloved of Giuliano Medici, and of how her fate was involved in the coil of Florentine history.

And finally comes the pearl of the book, the lovely "Quattrocentisteria, (How Sandro Botticelli saw Simonetta in the Spring)."

As a painter at the court of Lorenzo Medici there is no doubt that Botticelli saw Simonetta Vespucci. With a poet's right, Mr. Hewlett has conceived an altogether probable situation and beautifully elaborated it into this little gem. It is hardly to be called a short story, a conte. Here, as everywhere, Mr. Hewlett has differed somewhat in method from the great prose stylist, Pater, whom there is every evidence to believe the younger

man admired. Hewlett's style is all alive, all glowing, all colourful. In his "Imaginary Portrait," instead of gradually, almost stealthily approaching his main theme, as Pater would have done, he boldly pitches upon it in the very second paragraph:—

"Up at the Villa, with brisk morning airs rustling overhead, in the cool shades of trees and lawns, it was pleasant to lie still, watching these things while a silky young exquisite sang to his lute a not too audacious ballad about Selvaggia, or Becchina and the saucy Prior of Sant' Onofrio. He sang well too, that dark-eyed boy; the girl at whose feet he was crouched was laughing and blushing at once; and, being very fair, she blushed hotly. She dared not raise her eyes, to look into his, and he knew it and was quietly measuring his strength—it was quite a comedy! At each wanton refrain he lowered his voice to a whisper and bent a little forward. And the girl's laughter became hysterical; she was shaking with the effort to control herself. At last she looked up with a sort of sob in her breath and saw his mocking smile and the gleam of the wild beast in his eyes. She grew white, rose hastily and turned away to join a group

of ladies sitting apart. A man with a heavy, rather sullen face and a bush of yellow hair falling over his forehead in a wave, was standing aside watching all this. He folded his arms and scowled under his big brows; and when the girl moved away his eyes followed her."

* * *

"Such clear-cut, high beauty made him ashamed; but her colouring (for he was a painter) made his heart beat. She was no ice-bound shadow of deity then! but flesh and blood; a girl, a child, of timid, soft contours, of warm roses and blue veins laced in a pearly skin. And she was crowned with a heavy wealth of red-gold hair, twisted in great coils, bound about with pearls, and smouldering like molten metal where it fell rippling along her neck."

So she is seen in the head painted by Botticelli, an engraving from which graced the original edition of "Earthwork." No reader can well fail to perceive that here is a writer with something to say; a man possessed of historic imagination; a romanticist who can recreate dead and gone periods. "Quattrocentisteria" is not a very dramatic story, hard-

ly a tale at all, and yet one may find more of the real Renaissance in its few pages than in many chapters in Symonds' more formal history of the Renaissance in Italy.

"A Sacrifice at Prato" is in an altogether different vein. It is presumably a narrative by a cultured stranger, a citizen of the Roman empire, who has traveled not only in space but in time as well. Mr. Hewlett here endeavours to picture just how Catholic Italy, with its worship of Christ and the Virgin, would strike the cultivated Pagan, having an intimate acquaintance with all the ancient Greek myths. He shows how at first it seems to the Pagan that the people are rendering homage to Dionysus the Redeemer, and to Venus Genetrix, until he learns that the religious mainly worshipped a maimed and torn god, whose wounds are bleeding, and then he knows it can not be Dionysus, but "must needs be the Divine Eros, concerning whom Plato's words are yet with us. So I can understand why he is so wise, why he suffers always, and yet cannot be driven by torment, nor persuaded by sophisms to cease loving. For the necessity of love is to crave ever; and he is Love himself."

In this engaging style, the author manages to gather much of Italy between the covers of his little book. Some there are, who perhaps imagine Mr. Hewlett spent long years in Italy absorbing its spirit as the Brownings did. But in this they are mistaken. Hewlett has made only short vacation trips in what is surely one of the native lands of his spirit. He has a theory that it is an advantage to see a country in brief visits. He believes that while one thus feels the charm in every fibre of one's being, he can more easily pick out the great, salient facts about a land and its people.

However that may be, "Earthwork" is indeed builded of Italian earth; it is genuine; there is no make-believe. And whether this is seen in the light of after events or no, the book seems to have within its pages the seed of all the various kinds of artistry Mr. Hewlett was to bring to bear later upon larger and more important works.

A MASQUE OF DEAD FLORENTINES. SONGS AND MEDITATIONS. ARTEMISION.

AMONG the first writings of Mr. Hewlett, as with so many Englishmen of letters, were the poems written in the first flush of his literary youth. The question at once suggests itself, How will this devotee of the old things, this weaver of arras-like pictures, write as a poet? In some of his finest prose he is a Greek Pagan by way of the Italian Renaissance. In his early poetry, does he display the same passion for rich English, even to the touch of preciosity? Is he marked by the love of lovely words until one imagines him exclaiming fervently,—"I thank Heaven for this beautiful English word?"

These questions can best be answered by an examination of his verse, by an appeal to "A Masque of Dead Florentines," issued in 1895, to "Songs And Meditations," published in 1896 and to "Artemision," 1909. Despite the

fact that the publication date of the "Songs" is later than that of the "Masque," there are numerous signs that it is a gathering of the author's earliest work.

The young author, so soon afterwards to make fame for himself as a creator of entrancing feminine characters in fiction, was at this time in love with youth and young, growing things, with girl goddesses, little children, and fair flowers. Seemingly he was scarce aware that he dwelt in busy, commercial England. One must tread softly! Here in this forest the fair Clytie mourned. There Ariadne was forsaken. Coming through that coppice, oh wonder of wonders! one might intrude upon the fair Artemis herself, in all the glory of her deathless young body.

While the poet's dreams were mainly of Greece, and of Italy of Dante's day he had read and adored Keats and Shelley. He had studied the early Italians. He was familiar with the Elizabethan and Jacobean song-writers. He admired Donne and Crashaw and the courtier poets of Charles' day. At times in his Latinity and his preference for odes, he recalls the late Francis Thompson. If Mr. Hewlett is a Greek Pagan by way of the Italian Renaissance, ap-

propriately enough the "Songs" contain many Greek studies. They are Greek more often not so much in feeling as in subject, Greek as a cultured Italian of the Renaissance would write. His youth, his love for nature, and his English blood are shown by the prodigality with which he adorns his pages with fair English blossoms. He celebrates the crocus; he writes a study in white like this, worthy of a painter trying his hand at verse:

"White flowers, white flowers to deck my lady fair!
Clematis for her hair
A cluster of vale lilies for her bosom
With apple blossom;
Then out of open fields and grassy places
Pick her moon-daisies,
And make a wreath
With columbines and roses white as death;
Thus she will be
Smother'd in flower-foam, and live fragrantly."

Herrick was more graceful and a greater poet, but he was no fonder of flowers.

The young Hewlett has conned his Cavalier poets and writes: "That Stone Walls Can Never Separate Him From His Lady," "His Lady

A Thief," and "Having Lost His Lady." In memory of his Italian, he writes canzone and stornelli, and translates the dirge of Politian for the dead Lorenzo. There is little here to suggest the modern English poet, save it be one in his fledgling years trying his wings, imitating the old masters until he finds himself. The most modern note in this verse is sounded in "War Songs for the English" in which America is called upon to join England in a "rally." "Ariadne Forsaken" has the very sound of some of the great Greek choral numbers:

"Woman that liveth to love, to trust, and to cling,
Being forsworn,
Choketh the tears as they start,
Masketh the glint of her passion, traileth her wing
As a bird, grieveth apart,
Tearless, voiceless, forlorn,
Ripple of laughing and speech hath she to love; but to mourn,
Tempest of sighs, and labouring bosom, and shorn
Hair, and dead heart."

In an entirely different vein are the closing lines of his "Hymn to Artemis," modern where the other is Greek, and one of the numerous tributes paid by him to women, as fine as those minute descriptions scattered through his prose.

Contrasting with these pictures suggested by Greek subjects are the following opening lines of a poem entitled "Donna E. Gentil:"

"Thy lonely virginal air,
And thy vague eyes,
The carven stillness of thy sorrowful mouth,
And sanctity of thy youth,
Mark thee for no man's prize:
Set thee apart to be fair,
Holy, lovely, and wise."

In this there is the slow solemn music so apt to be associated with a study of Dante or a poem founded on his words, although, too, the lines themselves have something of Verlaine, when he is purest and most enchanting. So again Dante suggests a poem and under the title "Nessun Maggior Dolore" there is this version of the famous lines:

"Never a sharper grief
Than remembrance of happy things
When our misery stings
And wounds ache for relief."

It greatly excells the Carey version:

"No greater grief than to remember days
Of joy, when misery is at hand."

Besides these verses, the book contains chants from plays projected or, perhaps, partly finished, sonnets and formal odes. Two poems distinguished by their simplicity best indicate what direction Hewlett's talents as poet might have taken. One is a "Dirge" reminiscent distantly of William Morris in the best Pre-Raphaelite manner of the Guenevere volume. "For Cecco Sleepy" is an exquisite lullaby, a tune of childhood, with a drowsy lilting melody, nodding with its repetitions:

"Cecco's eyes begin to blink,
Lay him down, lay him down!
Tired little head must sink,
Little golden crown.

A MASQUE OF DEAD FLORENTINES

"Cecco plays the valiant part,
All the day, all the day!
That's an eager little heart
Tired out with play."

Long before Mr. Hewlett had made trips to Italy, he had sympathetically studied the great Italian poets. Dante he knew and loved; Pulci, Poliziano and other Florentines he read also in the original Italian.

"A Masque of Dead Florentines, wherein some of Death's Choicest Pieces, and the Great Game that he played therewith, are fruitfully set forth," gives the impression of being, in verse of the most epigrammatic sort, the definite result of these studies in the Italian Renaissance. It was the poetical result of it, just as "Earthwork" and "Little Novels of Italy" were the prose. The book crept quietly into print in 1895. It is doubtful whether any big literary publication even mentioned it. It is a peculiar work in English literature. Mr. Hewlett plays with the thought of death. For Beddoes, such themes were an obsession; in fact he was Death's veritable liegeman. Mr. Frank T. Marzials, in a unique set of sonnets entitled "Death's Disguises,"

has pictured Death disguised as a courtier, as a love-god, as a fool, as a harlot, etc. Mr. Hewlett treats of Death as the conqueror of all the famous Florentines who made their city what it was in history, art and song. He makes the reader think at times of "Everyman"and of "The Dance of Death." By the very nature of its subject and treatment, the "Masque" is placed beyond the chance of popularity, presupposing as it does an entire familiarity with, or at least an interest in, the great names in Florentine art, poetry and statecraft. Each of the heroes marches through its pages, explaining the very core of his life and aspirations in a quatrain, as worthy the term "epigram" as the somewhat famous early book of them by Mr. William Watson. It has been pointed out by Walter Pater that the great Florentines, and, indeed, all the natives of the famous city, were preoccupied with the thought of death. As proof of this it is only necessary to refer to the terrible "Pageant of Death" held in 1512, described by Vasari at length.

It is perhaps not wrong to conjecture that a knowledge of the details of this famous pageant and its song, coupled with a poet's

genuine insight into the Florentine heart and mind, led Mr. Hewlett to the composition of his very original and strange "Masque" in which the persons are given as "a chorus of tired ladies and poets forgotten," "the Florentine Shades," "A Herald," "Three Reproaches" and "King Death." It is not hard to see from this that it is a macabre book, a book that would make the ordinary reader approach it with a shudder. To this mixture of masque and morality play, which in a measure tells of the downfall of Florence from its exalted place, there is, strictly speaking, no action at all. The chorus stands in a ruined garden in winter. One by one the famous men and some few women famed in poetry and story, pass by, each with a quatrain on his or her lips. These quatrains are often taken up and elaborated by chorus as in the Greek play.. Chorus tells the story of Dante and his Beatrice, chimes in with the fair Simonetta, chants a dirge for Florence fallen. The ingenuity of the poet is displayed by the fact that each of the quatrains ends either with the word of doom, "dead" or "death," and yet there is no feeling of monotony, but only the cumulative and chilling

effect of the sense of inevitableness the author wishes to convey.

The first of the great shades to pass is that of Dante. It would seem impossible to compress within the narrow limits of a quatrain the story of such a great soul,—yet read:

"The first to speak in Florence, Florence spurn'd
My song and service. From home to outland turn'd,
I sensed God's secrets, eating salted bread.
God woke my love by death; they crown'd me dead."

Chorus then takes up the theme and here is part of its comment:

"And that great utterance he said
Liveth, and he who saw the dead
Cannot taste death; for Death's hand shook
To feel the burden of his book."

The power and beauty of that last sentence need little tribute. The true poet speaks in the words. It is one of the most vivid

and truly poetical lines writen by any of the younger men. Here is the secret of Petrarch, carver of lovely sonnets:

"My voice was as the swan's that dirgeth death;
My joys were frail things, lighter than a breath.
But, like the night, I froze them to a brede—
They wove me crowns thereof, and wrapt me dead."

Of the third of the great Florentine triad, he writes in a more romantic and passionate vein, as is proper in dealing with the great amorist and romancer of the Decameron:

"Heavy the blossoms, sultry-sweet the wine,
And all the air gold-dusted with sun-shine.
I found a girl's warm bosom for my head,
And—God was good! I lov'd till I was dead."

To have done with the poets and turn to other great names, here are the sinister and

stung him into one of his rare replies to critics. A writer in the London Times, while conceding him the passion, the accomplishment, and the command of verbal magic which might mean great poetry, attacked his treatment of his theme, saying the purity of his Artemis was shown, not as a virtue, a force, but as a negation; and that his real topic was not the beauty of purity so much as the shamefulness of passion. Part of Hewlett's reply is significant for the light it casts upon his fictional heroines as well as for its exposition of the meaning of "Artemision:—"

"The Greeks had two virgin goddesses—Athena of Attica and Artemis of Arcady. The virginity of Athena, as I read the myths in Attic literature, was 'a virtue, a force' (to quote your reviewer); that of Artemis was precisely 'a negation.' Athena stood for the idea of deliberate virginity, Artemis for the innate virginity of all healthy young creatures —to my mind a more beautiful, if not more interesting, conception. It is this, absolutely which I have set myself to exhibit in various phases. The 'morals,' as your reviewer rightly says, are neither here not there. They are mine; the goddess has need of none."

THE FOREST LOVERS.

MR. HEWLETT'S first novel appeared in 1898. Up to that time he had written few books and these were addressed to the small and select coterie which would read aesthetic appreciations of Italian art and life, and the poetic excursions of a talented youth filled with a love for the gods of Greece and the exquisite legends concerning them. There was seemingly in Mr. Hewlett the making of a younger Pater, who would devote his spare moments to lectures on medieval topics and to printing occasional essays as the fruit of his studies upon such themes. Certainly one would not have predicted that the author of "Earthwork" was destined to become one of the great romanticists of the day.

But granting his ambition to write romance, there is not much cause for wonder at the direction he chose. From boyhood on his mind had been attracted toward certain kin-

dred writers. As a mere lad he had adored Mallory.

"The Forest Lovers" is a direct and belated offshoot of the Pre-Raphaelite school, which itself was a direct phase of the general romantic movement which swept all over Europe. The German and French romanticists had an especial love for Catholicism and for Italy, for medieval times and for Pre-Raphaelite painters like Botticelli and Ghirlandajo. Hewlett loved these topics too. Non-conformist and Huguenot ancestors did not inspire Mr. Hewlett with a hatred of Catholicism. On the other hand, his attitude is one of constant reverence and friendliness. He is temperamentally and intellectually akin to the continental members of the romantic school. But he is also in direct touch with the English Pre-Raphaelites, those innovators who sought in their creations to revive the forgotten world of old romance, the world of wonder and mystery and spiritual beauty. The keynote of the work was indeed, what Theodore Watts-Dunton called "The renascence of wonder."

In many ways William Morris was the healthiest and best member of this school. He took for his chief models Chaucer, Mal-

lory, and the old French romances. Medieval art often has a dreamy beauty, something that is faint and shadowy, and it is this kind of beauty that marks the first medieval stories by Morris, contributed to the Oxford and Cambridge Magazine. In these tales Morris attempts to hark back to old times and to re-create the atmosphere of a dead era. The stories are charming, but not convincing. One doubts whether the characters in them would bleed if wounded. The romance of the Guenevere volume is more robust and more colourful, deriving as it does from the old ballads.

Now it is precisely the work of Mallory and of Morris that inspired Mr. Hewlett. The youth who knew Mallory by heart, had his attention directed to Morris by no less a critic than his own father, who said Morris, had "saturated his imagination with the glow of chivalric romance and Catholic mythology."

The homesickness for the Middle Ages these authors created in the boy remained in the man. He determined to write a Pre-Raphaelite romance, but one touched by the humour and the alertness of the 19th century. Mr.

Hewlett went back to medieval well-springs of thought and emotion, but he cast aside medieval iteration. He placed his narrative vaguely in the Middle Ages, but he dropped a certain childish naivete characteristic of 13th century narratives. He used all the old properties of the romantic stage, but he told his tale in a spirit of fantastic ideality. He used a language that smacked neither of the Wardour street phase of Morris's career, nor of that later period when Morris was enamoured of Anglo-Saxon words to the exclusion of all others. Mr. Hewlett took his words from many sources and used a fragrant and ruddy English that was a delight to read, despite the fact that at times it verged upon the precious. Some critics saw only the preciosity.

In England the reviews were, however, in the main friendly. In fact, on January 14, 1899 "The Academy" crowned the book as one of the three best productions of the year and gave its author 50 guineas. The other crowned books for 1898 were Mr. Sidney Lee's "Life of Shakespeare," and Mr. Joseph Conrad's "Tales of Unrest." In crowning "The Forest Lovers," the editor of "The Academy" praised it especially for its "brave

front," something not too common in English literature, although among the moderns, Borrow, Whitman and Stevenson were pointed out as possessing it.

The purchasing public liked the novel even better than the critics. The book showed Mr. Hewlett as a master of the romantic form. Following his own definition, in his consideration of De Stendhal's novels, Mr. Hewlett displayed a love of adventure, a keenness of dramatic sense, a feeling for atmosphere, and a rapidity of movement not surpassed in his day. Futhermore it was real romance, not pseudo-romance that he gave his readers. This is neither the time nor the place for an extended discussion of what is meant by the term "real romance." Its definition is one that has troubled many writers about literature and a clear-cut explanation is yet to seek. The best is not a definition at all. It is a comparison, however, which throws a clear light upon the subject. It is by the late Mr. John Davidson and is as follows:—

"Romanticism bears somewhat the same relation to romance that sentimentality bears to sentiment."

In Mr. Hewlett's first novel there is real ro-

mance, just as there is genuine sentiment instead of namby-pamby sentimentalism. "The Forest Lovers," despite its medieval tone, has a theme which recommends it to the suffrages of modern readers. Like the pastourelles of the 12th and 13th centuries. it deals with a certain sort of love. "The pastourelles," one writes, "were a special variety of love story of the kind so curiously popular in all medieval languages, and so curiously alien from modern experience, where a passing knight sees a damsel of low degree, and woos her at once, with or without success." It is to be added that there was a development of the theme in which the maiden proved to be not low, but of high degree, as, for instance, in that masterpiece of the Middle Ages, the lovely "Aucassin and Nicolete." "The Forest Lovers," is a prose pastourelle, if the term may be allowed.

It struck a fresh note at the time it appeared. People had become accustomed to the minute realism of Hardy, to the dazzle of Meredith, to the strangeness of Kipling's India, to the humble human comedy of Barrie's Thrums, to the toy kingdoms of Hope.

The public was ready for a story of pure

romance, laid in that no man's land of dreams which is sometimes the most real of all lands. The author did not try to deceive his readers. On the very first page of his book he set forth in brief just what he proposed to tell:

"My story will take you into times and spaces alike rude and uncivil. Blood will be spilled, virgins suffer distresses; the horn will sound through woodland glades; dogs, wolves, deer and men, Beauty and the Beasts will tumble each other, seeking life or death with their proper tools. There should be mad work, not devoid of entertainment."

The promise here made is well kept. It is a Forest of Arden book. There are hints of New Forest, but there is more of Morte D'Artur in it and something besides of Mr. Hewlett's own. The book is brave with the sunlight of the open lawny spaces, sweet with the fragrant breezes of the forest's green alleys. It is a story of love, of love overwhelming. At first it almost seems it is going to exemplify an Ibsen saying: "To love, to sacrifice all and to be forgotten—that is women's saga."

Isoult, the heroine, is the kind of woman of whom such a saying is true. But she inspires

a love that will not forget and will not rest—and that makes the story. The tale is far from being a perfect one. It is full of the kind of weakness a first novel is apt to have. Its chapter on Spiridion reads as if it might have been written by some pale German romanticist. Its characters often do things that can only be accounted for on the theory that if they had acted otherwise the story would have come to an untimely end early in the chapter. But the crudest thing in the book, a crudity of which Mr. Hewlett was never again guilty, was the mingled symbolism and coincidence in a series of happenings.

But enough of the disagreeable if necessary and thankless work of the advocatus diaboli. Perhaps the more sensible way to treat of the book would be to consider: Taken as a whole does it charm; does it carry one along breathlessly from incident to incident unto the happy end? The answer is, of course, in the affirmative. The book does charm with a score of graces. It has the grace of style. It has the lovely grace of youth. Indomitable youth sings in every line of it. It has the grace of the poet who loves nature, who joys

in the changing spells the forest casts, who loves Love and all his almoners . It has the grace of humour and fun, which is very un-Morrisian, to coin an uncouth phrase.

It has the charm of introducing the second in Mr. Hewlett's wonderful gallery of women,—Isoult, a woman almost all flesh and blood, although living in the arras world of faery.

This is because the work is more than the clever "fake," which the author himself once lightly pronounced it. There is something more in it than a fairy story of a Mallory world. Red blood flows in the veins of some of its characters. Real emotions are felt. Real moral battles are fought and won. It is a story of a knight who rescues and weds a maid in distress. Various villains pursue her, this one for lust, that one for fortune. The beggar maid is revealed as a princess in her own right. The significant figures are Prosper and Isoult la Desirous, who was desirous of the love of the man who wedded her to save her from villains. Brandes says of certain German authors: "the love of the Romanticists is a refined and chastened love, 'the art of love.'" There is no such love in Prosper's case. There is no love at all at

first. There is simply lust of the eye. He is chastened by longing. He is taught by experience. Only gradually does he learn that woman's love means to love a man and be silent; to serve him gladly; to suffer for him, if need be, die for him, but always in all sweetness of spirit and holiness of soul. It is the necessity for the lesson the hero must learn that gives Mr. Hewlett the opportunity for a fine scene between Prosper and her who has been his wife in name only, a scene in which she shows him to himself, as one not loving but lustful, not claiming her as wife but with hot desire as for a leman.

The woman is thus shown to have the deeper character. Prosper is merely a light-hearted, thoughtless, healthy young animal, who loves beauty, who loves a fight, who loves mastery. But Isoult is more complex. Well born, she remembers nothing but a life of sordid misery and privation. Virginal in heart and soul, she has been harried all her young life, because of the fatal gift of beauty, a curse rather than a blessing in a world of medieval manners and men. She is lovely even in her rags. She is breeched as a boy, a minor Rosalind, whose two chief words in

connection with her lord are "love" and "serve." She endures beatings at the hands of charcoal-burners rather than reveal her sex; nameless outrages at the hands of a heartless mob rather than reveal the real relation between herself and Prosper. She is faithful in all ways; ready to be faithful unto death. She is Mr. Hewlett's medieval woman, lovely and loving and meek. And after all she is simply a child, her heart unchilled and her mind untainted by the evil she has read in men's eyes and the foulness she has heard from men's mouths.

The success of "The Forest Lovers," did more than determine the career of Mr. Hewlett. It was directly responsible for a school of card-board medieval fiction whose chief exponents are still busy writing tales to fit coloured plates in the magazines. But these stories are lacking in the qualities that won for Mr. Hewlett. In "The Forest Lovers," despite all crudities and mannerisms, the sunlight that shines down the dappled ways has real warmth; the breeze has real strength; beneath the bodices of rich cloth and the suits of durable armour, hearts beat that are stirred by real love and real hate.

PAN AND THE YOUNG SHEPHERD.

"PAN and the Young Shepherd" is one of the finest things Mr. Hewlett has done. When the chapter on his work is finally closed and the last assay made, this will not be counted among the least of his achievements.

The works on poetics say that pastoral drama is a thing done best in Elizabethan and Jacobean times. The student is referred to Jonson and Fletcher and is told that this sort of thing is not written in modern days. He is even informed that eclogues and idylls, after the Theocritean manner, are outmoded. People no longer pretend to believe in shepherds who discourse wisely and sweetly of life and love and death; who play the oaten pipe under spreading trees, while they dream of the great elemental things of this world.

Shepherds call to mind their patron god, the great god Pan, and readers are told in melodious verse that Pan is dead, that the

Christian era killed him, just as it sent Apollo to slave in Picardy, and drove other gods into exile.

Of all said regarding the writing of pastoral drama in this modern day, this passage is the truest:

"It must be realistic to a certain degree.... Then it must be romantic, too, with the romance of nature, with that feeling for the strangeness and mystery of the deep woods and open uplands that is one of the notes of the poetry of this century. Then, probably it must be idealistic, in that each figure and character must be surcharged with the feeling and atmosphere of some mood or tendency in thought; for that is something we cannot escape now. And it should also be classic; for the pastoral is a traditional form; it reminds us of the best periods of our literature. It is a form moulded by the touch of masters who are classic."

The writer of this definition frankly says it is not an a priori formula, but one deduced from a perusal of "Pan." It is something to have done so well as to supply an acute critic with the material for a new formula. And how well Mr. Hewlett illustrates it! He

is realistic in his rustics, idealistic in his lovers, romantic in his worship of nature, classic in his following of models hallowed by time, and the best judgment of the ablest critics, Yes, the pastoral is possible today,—when a Hewlett writes it.

He has worked in prose, on the whole, where the classic authors worked in poetry, although, of course Mr. Hewlett's method is that of the poet. For the nonce, he has believed in Pan. It is almost as if Robert Louis Stevenson had foreseen the condition under which a modern man would produce a Pan Play:

"The Greeks figured Pan, the god of Nature, now terriblly stamping his foot, so that armies were dispersed; now by the woodside on a summer noon trolling on his pipe until he charmed the hearts of the upland ploughmen. And the Greeks, in so figuring, uttered the last word of human experience. To certain smoke-dried spirits matter and motion and elastic ethers, and the hypothesis of this and that spectacled professor, tell a speaking story; but for youth and all ductile and congenial minds, Pan is not dead, but of all the classic hierarchy alone survives in triumph; goat-footed with a gleeful and angry look,

the type of the shaggy world; and in every wood, if you go with a spirit properly prepared, you shall hear the note of his pipe."

It is exactly in this ductile and congenial mood of youth, that Mr. Hewlett entered that fancy-land:—

"Scene, pastoral country: Champney Valtort in Pascency, and the hills about it. Time, what you will."

Here in this land dwell peasants, pagan at heart and with a thin veneer of Christianity; here dwells Neanias, with an unearthly strain in his blood; here Pan is at his eternal play, the laughing god to those who yield to him, the angry immortal to those who seek to thwart his will.

Take Jonson's exquisite fragment of "The Sad Shepherd" as an exemplar for comparison's sake and see how faithfully Mr. Hewlett has followed classic models. He makes his shepherd boy, Neanias, discourse in prose that is touched by the fire of poetry. Jonson's sad shepherd, Aeglamour, speaks in divine verse such as no peasant ever uttered save in the pages of the masters.

Jonson did not shrink from injecting humour into his pastoral, declaring in his prologue:

"But here's an heresy of late let fall,
That mirth by no means fits a pastoral."

Even as Jonson did not hesitate, so, too the modern poet has used humour, racy of the soil, to enliven his little play. And finally, just as Jonson introduced supernatural beings in the shape of Robin Goodfellow and his mistress, the witch, so in the later production, there are Pan and the seven daughters of earth.

Despite this following of classic models, despite the odd snatches of verse with which each act is prefaced, despite the old English which is sometimes spoken, and the atmosphere of old time which is conveyed, the poet remains a modern, too. He can not escape his age entirely. He is filled with the modern love of nature, in addition to a pagan worship of nature-forces, amounting to pantheism He is alive also to the modern tendencies, to a symbolism which is not often easily expounded; which is felt, but not explainable. Whether he would or no, in "Pan" Mr. Hewlett is brother to Maeterlinck of the early plays and William Sharp of the "Vistas."

One expounder called this pastoral merely

a weaker "Forest Lovers." Another said the peasants were peasants of today labeled with Greek names, while still another said they belonged to the Middle Ages. This much is true:—the poet created his own country, even as he did in "The Forest Lovers," although the Derbyshire Peak and the Cheviot Hills gave him some hint as to his locale. When it comes to the time, there is doubt, although terms like "reeve," "pinder," "multure," "theaves," and "hogget" point to a provincial England of Chaucer's day.

The story of the little play is simple. Neanias, a shepherd lad, after discoursing with his grandfather, Geron, driven on by a restless heritage in his blood, (the gift of his mother about whom the glamour of mystery is thrown, even as Ibsen throws it about Ellida, "The Lady from the Sea"), goes to seek the "sisters of the Tarn," the seven earth spirits, of whom six have yielded to Pan, while the seventh, Aglae, Virgin Dawn, has been stricken cold and dumb by the angry god. The six sisters, who have their powers of speech, seek to beguile Neanias, but in vain. He takes Aglae by the hand, wins her for bride, and takes her home with him. In the

next act, the poet shows Aglae still dumb, but broken to domestic ways, serving Neanias, the while he is more in love with her than ever. Pan sends a great storm, and Aglae, drawn against her will, leaves the hut and goes into the night, while the peasantry are guarding their sheep. But she does not leave before Merla—in love with Neanias—has given her hard words. Neanias seeks his lost wife, only to be jeered at by the six sister who proclaim the awful might of Pan, who greatly angered strikes down both Neanias and his loved one. Merla, quite conscience-stricken, meets Pan, who is attracted by the healthy beauty of the wench. She pleads for Neanias and his Aglae and agrees to give herself to Pan—but in marriage—a piquant and daring touch. The play ends with Aglae restored to speech and gladly listening while her husband intones an Epiphany song. This outline may convey an idea of the scope of "Pan." There are three kinds of characters in it,—the peasants, with their shrewd, hard-won wisdom; Neanias, the lover made bold by his love; and the earth-spirits expressing themselves in song.

The chief of these rustics is Geron, the

grandfather of Neanias. He is a real shepherd with the smell and the colour of the soil upon him; with his love of sheep, his wise saws about the weather, his racy views about life, his odd cronies.

His speech is authentic. His autobiography in little rings true. It is the shepherd to the life.

Now, in writing, a literary man who desires to create clowns has two kinds of models before him. There are Shakespeare's wonderful clowns, in a class all by themselves, not mere rustic witlings, but sublimated fools, if the term may be allowed. They are of no time and place, but as universal as humanity, as independent of time as the deathless plays in which they laugh, and hum their quaint old tunes. Then there is the clown peculiar to one particular region, the rustic of Hardy's beloved Wessex, for instance. Since Pascency is anywhere and the time in which they lived is "what you will," Mr. Hewlett had to make his clowns representative of the class rather than typical of any particular region. He has chosen to learn from the unapproachable bard, rather than from the contemporary novelist. There is a homely wit and wisdom

in these Pascency rustics which, with some few changes, might be found in ignorant men of the soil anywhere. Their simple old jokes, their homely similes, their quaint old rhymes have the rich savour of real life. Hear them at their wit-combats, when they are slightly tipsy:

Mopsus:

"Life goes to a tune according as a man is tuneful, hath music. Not otherwise by no means. Sphorx, now, should be ripe wi' tunes like an old organ.

Sphorx (leaning back):

"My soul is as it were a windy bag; you must jog me ere I sing. I should be squeezed."

Geron:

"I could a' squeezed ye ten year back."

Teucer:

"I can pinch ye, Sphorx, if it is only a matter of a nip here and there. Lords! What a knotty thigh. Sphorx, thou'rt a seasonable vessel."

Sphorx:

"Alack, no vessel am I, but an humble instrument, friends, of the Lord's making, the Lord's making. Well! I will sing ye a stave of an old antient tune, perhaps ye know it.

'Tis all of a man and—"

Geron:

"And a woman, for a thousand pound!"

Sphorx:

"There is mention of a female, and of cider, and of sheep, and of a man's wife or wives."

Neanias is different from these men. If he has any of his grandfather's blood in his veins, he hardly shows it. The passionate, poetic brain of the sea-woman, his mother, is his also. Throughout, he is contrasted with old Geron. The poetry of the one is set off against the homely prose of the other; the otherworldliness of the younger clashes with the homely wisdom of the seasoned "antient;" the dreamer is pitted against the man of practical, if small, affairs. Neanias is a poet, filled with the love of forests and of all nature, a poet who is blind to material things, who goes questing for the girl of his dream.

To come now to Mr. Hewlett's mythus. He has created seven new goddesses, or rather earth spirits. It is easy to understand the legend in part. Pan is, of course, the great fructifier, the great underlying and stimulating principle of nature, making fruitful these daughters of earth. But consider Aglae and

seek to analyze farther and more explicitly and the student becomes quite as befogged, as did those who attempted to write out in plain words what the symbolists of France and Belgium meant. It is best to fall back on Mr. Hewlett himself. He will give as distinct a key as may be needed:

" 'Pan and the Young Shepherd' is difficult to account for. I was steeped in poetry just then and had been reading an enormous amount of Platonism, Greek mythology and pantheistic stuff. There's a deal of pantheism tucked away in it and some good mythology. The whole thing is really a myth. The root idea. I suppose is the oneness of creation—man as a natural force, differing in no essential way from Plants and Animals. Then God is reduced to the same expression and He and Man, and the Wind and Weather, Trees, Sheep, Love, Life, Death, Fear, all play their parts out and meet and merge and mate and mingle. I believe it's more or less true, even now. Personally, I think 'Pan' the nearest I have ever come to poetry. It's the only sort of poetry I can do."

Mr. Hewlett has created new characters in mythology and has allowed them to describe

themselves very graphically.. Sitys says: "My laughing is lighter than the leap of a squirrel, and brighter than the sun on the yellow leaves. I love good cheer and warm woods: I am very kind. I suckle the young fauns that I bear to my lord the goat-shankt. I am Bonny Beech Mast." Dryas says: "I am Dryas, Crown O' The Oak, youngest but one of the seven Sisters. I am too wild to be foster-mother of fauns. I love all, but choose none. Chiefest I love the Sun, and the Sun me. If I have a master it is the Sun."

The songs by the sisters, might be defined as Mr. Hewlett's plus something echoed from Shelley, as when Adora sings:

"I am the Morning Calm and the smile of me is like sleep
Even and deep;
And my eyes are twin-mountain lakes, and the lashes of them
Like the swishing sedge
That hideth the water's edge.
I float on the white water ere daylight begins
Or the moon grows wan,
And I spin at a loom the life of the day to come,

painted five panel pictures, brilliant with colour, dazzling, struck off at a white heat, glowing with the energy and poetry of youth. Schwob's "Mimes" have always a greyness about them as of faded antiques, toned by time. And this is proper. Mr. Hewlett's panels are brilliant with reds and greens and golds. And this, too, is proper.

Always remembering that the subjects are taken from Renaissance times, his panels might have been labeled respectively, "Verona," "Padua," "Nona," "Pistoja" and "Ferrara." Or, dropping for the moment his own titles and attempting to condense in a phrase the inner meaning of each, they could have been labeled: "A legend of Madonna; "Love of the Precieuses;" "Love of the condottieri;" "Love of a Renaissance poet;" and finally and simply "Love's Comedy."

Almost all of Renaissance Italy is touched upon in some of its phases in these five delightful productions. If love is the main theme, it is proper, "for love in loved-learned Tuscany was then a roaring wind; it came rhythmically and set the glowing mass beating like the sestet of a sonnet. One lived in numbers in those days; numbers always came.

LITTLE NOVELS OF ITALY.

MARCEL SCHWOB, trying to depict the manners and feelings of an age long dead, invented for himself, or perhaps perfected is the discreeter phrase, a method of doing so by painting miniatures,—giving brief, vivid glimpses into the life of by-gone days.

This is at its best in "Mimes," and "The Children's Crusade," especially in the former. A page or two suffices to set forth some phase of the thought of some one personage in the faraway ancient Greece of the classical era.

Small in itself though it be, each miniature is revelatory of the painter's great learning. It shows how much he has read and dreamed of Greece; how much he has comprehended by intuition and by taking thought.

Similarly in his "Little Novels of Italy" Mr. Hewlett has depicted the life of Renaissance Italy after a method of his own. He has

painted five panel pictures, brilliant with colour, dazzling, struck off at a white heat, glowing with the energy and poetry of youth. Schwob's "Mimes" have always a greyness about them as of faded antiques, toned by time. And this is proper. Mr. Hewlett's panels are brilliant with reds and greens and golds. And this, too, is proper.

Always remembering that the subjects are taken from Renaissance times, his panels might have been labeled respectively, "Verona," "Padua," "Nona," "Pistoja" and "Ferrara." Or, dropping for the moment his own titles and attempting to condense in a phrase the inner meaning of each, they could have been labeled: "A legend of Madonna; "Love of the Precieuses;" "Love of the condottieri;" "Love of a Renaissance poet;" and finally and simply "Love's Comedy."

Almost all of Renaissance Italy is touched upon in some of its phases in these five delightful productions. If love is the main theme, it is proper, "for love in loved-learned Tuscany was then a roaring wind; it came rhythmically and set the glowing mass beating like the sestet of a sonnet. One lived in numbers in those days; numbers always came.

You sonnetteered upon the battle-field, in the pulpit, on the bench, at the bar."

And there are all sorts and conditions of Renaissance men in love,—princes of degree, captains of old wars, poets of fame, poetic fops, seasoned condottieri, pages, secretaries and shepherds.

Thinking of these things, one critic compared the stories not to painting, but "to a set of musical pieces in which the only marks of expression are 'amoroso' and 'con dolcezza.'"

Literature as well as life has always inspired Mr. Hewlett. The reader naturally, therefore, wonders what relation these little novels bear to the old Italian novelle.

The latter were the instruments in which the keynote of the Renaissance was struck. Very probably then if Mr. Hewlett's tales resemble the novelle, they serve as the medium in which he has conveyed the best of what he knows and feels about Italy of the Renaissance.

The novelle, Symonds says, is a narrative, but invariably brief and sketchy. "It does not aim at presenting a detailed picture of human life within certain artificially chosen

limitations, but confines itself to a striking situation, or tells an anecdote illustrative of some moral quality."

"The narrator went straight to his object, which was to arrest attention, stimulate the curiosity, gratify the sensual instincts, excite the laughter, or stir the tender emotions of his audience by some fantastic, extraordinary, voluptuous, comic or pathetic incident. He sketched his personages with a few swift touches, set forth their circumstances with pungent brevity, and expended his force upon the painting of the central motive."

And Symonds adds that entertainment was clearly their one great object. This quotation makes clear how closely these "Little Novels" approach to the Renaissance novelle. They, too, go straight to their one central theme; they, too, sketch their personages briefly and vividly and they, too, march rapidly forward in narrative. They, too, are by turns fantastic, extraordinary, voluptuous, comic, and pathetic. There is even occasionally a tragic note.

Conforming thus very closely to the definition of an old style, they conform likewise to a modern. It has been said that the modern short story is either an anecdote or a picture.

In the hands of a master it may be both. Mr. Hewlett's "Little Novels" are both anecdotes and pictures. Each presents a distinct picture of a city of the Renaissance time. Each conceivably could have started from some anecdote or legend to be gathered from the letters, histories and memoirs of the period. The criticism has been made that these stories are purely objective; that the author stimulates, but does not satisfy; that he narrates, but does not prove; that he needs to toil for a deeper vision of the human heart and a greater power of convincement.

Remember that these are novelle and it will be seen that such sayings are hypercritical. To demand what he does not pretend nor wish to give, is as if one censured a comedian for not being tragic. Mr. Hewlett had a definite object in view, a definite plan that he carried out. These stories present objectively a vision of Italy. They illuminate and explain an era. They are not phychological and do not pretend to be. Within the limits set for them, they are among the best examples of story-writing of the past three or four decades. They do for Italy what Stevenson's two famous short stories did for

medieval Paris. They fix his fame as a short story writer. So unemotional and seasoned a critic as Mr. Frederic Harrison has said: "I hold 'The Madonna of the Peach Tree' to be as perfect a short story as we have had in our time. It has humour, poetry, pathos, mystery, imaginative history, and pure humanity."

There should be coupled with this story, thus acclaimed, "The Judgment of Borso," so various in its charm and fun, so dainty, so daring a piece of typical Hewlett high comedy when Mr. Hewlett is at his best.

Part of their charm is that these stories break away from the somewhat traditional Italy. George Brandes points out that the Italy of literature is a country which never existed on any map save of the romanticists. The real Italy of bright colours and cheerful life, he says, is not to be found in their pages. To the romanticists Italy became what Dulcinea was to Don Quixote, an ideal of which they knew almost nothing beyond what was conveyed by a few general and descriptive phrases. They loved Italy as a ruin, Catholicism as a mummy. This is not so with Mr. Hewlett. He gives an Italy that is alive, pulsating with the fierceness of life; pictures

a Catholicism very human and very close to the hearts and lives of the common people. His Italy does exist on the map.

Each of the five tales here grouped together has a certain similarity beyond that of time and place. Each deals with the problems that confront a clean-hearted and simple-minded girl set amid the whirl of a life that is fantastic or frivolous, or evil. They are simple fools made for loving; tall girls—Mr. Hewlett likes them tall—with "long sweet bodies," mostly golden-haired and mostly with eyes grey or green. Mr. Hewlett is a lover of women and he loves them honest. In this he is a striking contrast to Merimee, for instance, most of whose heroines are wicked either by nature or choice. In Mr. Hewlett's books even his rips have their redeeming qualities, are rather the product of their environment and tragic circumstances than innately evil, are passionately anxious to do the right.

So in these stories, no matter how dire the peril, the woman triumphs, saving her honour even though it be at the cost of life itself.

For the most part, the women of the "Little Novels" are lowly in origin; as Mr. Hewlett would phrase it, each is "a madonna of the re-

gion." There were no direct sources for these tales. In each of the five cities the genius loci spoke to the poet-heart of this novelist, and the madonna of the place suggested her own type of story. This madonna was the typical woman to be found there even in these days by the discerning visitor,— the honest, good girl who "might have lived and died in her alley—sweetheart of some half dozen decent fellows, wife of the most masterful, mother of a dozen brats, unnoticed save for her qualities of cheerful drudge and broodmare; beautiful as a spring leaf till twenty, ripe as a peach on the wall till thirty, keen-faced and wise, mother and grandmother at forty; and so on—such she might have lived and died and been none the worse for her reclusion, had she not—" and there the story begins.

Simple Giovanna Scarpa, happy wife, and happy mother of a son, is accused of wrong-doing with a handsome priest who is stoned from the city. See now how the legend grows:

"A belated woman with a baby stumbles upon a company of shepherds all in the twittering dark. Hearts jump to mouths, flesh creeps, hairs stand tiptoe—Madonna, of course! Whom else could they call her, pray? They

don't know the woman; name her they must. Well! Who is there they don't know whose name comes readiest to the tongue? Madonna, of course. Good: Ecco Madonna!"

With this little scene as the climax, Mr. Hewlett works both backward to the beginning and forward to the end. It is quite a pathetic little comedy with its life story of Vanna, its tender picture of her doting motherhood, its warm human appreciation of the Catholic worship of the Madonna, and its skilled exposition of how the legend and the wonder of it grew and grew until it had become fixed in the traditions of a city. And all this is garnished with swift pictures of shepherd life, of tavern life, and of the wild reckless life of Can Grande, lord of Verona.

Mr. Hewlett does not devote himself to the legend exclusively. He composes the story out of which conceivably the legend grew and so makes it something more intimate, more human and more understandable.

Ippolita, likewise lowly, becomes the heroine of a comedy, played by poetic fantasts and rough shepherd boys. Content to dwell in her alley and be wooed for wife, she is seized

by Alessandro del Dardo and his fellow poets, male and female, precieuses all. She is carried off to be the heroine of their silly song. The maid, who knows more about the prose of the kitchen than the poetry of courts, is told of the lily of her candour, the rose of her cheeks, the crocus of her hair, the pink anemones which are her toes, the almond of her fingers. She sits very afraid on her throne, not comprehending all this foolishness, nor understanding the worship which uses her as a figure out of which to conjure tropes, rather than as a warm sweet-lipped girl ripe for kissing. Is it any wonder that finally, disguised in boy's clothes, she makes her escape to the alluring hills where the shepherd boys dwell? Here she toils, here she is knocked down, even as Isoult was when dwelling with the charcoal burners in the forest. But this Ippolita is not an Isoult of high lineage. No knight is reserved for her. She marries the shepherd who knocked her down, and is happy.

"The Duchess of Nona" illustrates another phase of woman's love. Handsome English Mary Lovell, daughter of a respectable wharfinger of Bankside is carried off as wife of Amilcare Passavente, who under the spell of

her cool lips and her pretty clinging ways, becomes a poet, calling her his "Lady Whitethroat" and other names as endearing and as intimate. But the honeymoon is soon over and Amilcare, adventurer and soldier of fortune, makes himself Duke of Nona mainly through his handsome Duchess, who wins all men's hearts and finally, as a possession for which even a Borgia is willing to chaffer, brings death to others and finds cruel death herself,—though with her honour unscathed.

The tale of Messer Cino turns historical dates topsy-turvy and treats the poet with disrespect. It is in its essence a farce comedy.

As for "The Judgment of Borso," analysis is not easy. It is such a filmy, gauzy, dainty little comedy, its fun is so contagious, its spirit so audacious, its changes of scene so bewildering, that it defies compression in a paragraph. It is a story of the romantic love of two, hot-hearted young people and of how their passion was snatched from tragic ending by the cool judgment of Duke Borso. The author's narrative is so swift, he enjoys its telling so keenly himself, he relates its episodes with such dash, that improbabilities are forgotten. The magic of the moment!

The reader gives himself up to that in each of these wonderful stories in which Mr. Hewlett's art touched high water mark,—stories which set him as a man apart, the most keen-visioned, high-hearted, and poetically-equipped of all exponents of Italian humanism.

RICHARD YEA AND NAY.

IF you love the very words Middle Age; if you conjure up in your mind glowing old folios of black letter with gilt and florid initials; crimson and blue pages in which slim ladies with spiked headdresses walk amid sparse flowers and trees like bouquets, or where men-at-arms attack walled cities no bigger than themselves, or long-legged youths with tight waists and frizzed hair kiss girls under apple trees; or a king is on a dais with gold lillies for his background, minstrels on their knees before him, lovers in the gallery:—If with all such dainty circumstances, you can be pleased and not offended with the shrewd surmise of savagery and heathenism only too ready to go naked, then you will do well"—not to go Pistoja as Mr. Hewlett eloquently puts it, but to the historical romance entitled, "The Life and Death of Richard Yea and Nay."

Mr. Hewlett's Richard is to be preferred to

Scott's because it gives the truer picture of Richard, because its scope is more ample, its canvass bigger, its figures more life-like, its feeling for the 12th century more correct than that of Sir Walter in "The Talisman," in which he is generally considered to have pre-empted all claim to Richard. Scott may have been as much a student of medieval times as Mr. Hewlett; nay, more so, but whatever his knowledge, he chose to suppress some of the results of it. Scott's medieval world is always a dream world, peopled by gallant knights, women who are mere embodiments of a knight's ideal, and some common people. Being residents in a dream world, they naturally have dream manners. The heathenism of real medieval men beneath their thin veneer of Christian civilization, their innate love of blood, their cruelty, their carelessness as to the sufferings of the baseborn, even their indifference to such things as cleanliness,—when well known to Sir Walter—, are never expressed in his romances. None of the Scott heroes would ever praise his lady's whiteness by contrasting it with the blackness of his own body, unwashed since he set forth in the wars.

And just as he is discreet to the point of suppression in depicting the reverse side of the shield, so is he likewise discreet in his treatment of the relation between the sexes. Hence there are practically no descriptions of erotic situations at all.

This much must be said for truth's sake. Scott's reputation, happily, does not depend upon his Ivanhoes and his Talismans, but upon immortal pictures of Scotch life, upon his Jennie Deans and his Bailie Nicoll Jarvies. However much Scott the innovator may have delighted his own generation with his romances of the Middle Ages, people now know that the Middle Ages were not a stained glass world, where knights were always good and where ladies fair always waited to be wooed and won.

Human passions ran just as high then as now, nay higher; they were not shackled by the thousand restraints put upon modern men. Love and hate, lust for battle and lust for the flesh, were big things in life, things exploited with frank, even brutal candour. And there is more of this in Mr. Hewlett than in Scott.

Again in writing historical romances, Mr. Hewlett differs from his great predecessor in

other particulars. In Scott, the great historic personages are made minor figures in the novels; in Mr. Hewlett's book they are made the main figures. Scott is more concerned with the story of the adventures of some romantic youth and maiden. Mr. Hewlett, while giving romance, shows himself a child of his age, by attempting a phychological analysis of his main personage.

Thackeray does not tamper with historic fact in his "Esmond." He takes as perhaps the main theme a perplexing point, such as the problem as to why Queen Anne failed to try to pass the inheritance of the crown to her Stuart nephew. Considering each known fact, he adds to it others and makes explanation of the problem. He extends known facts and so does not jar one's sense of the probabilities. Mr. Hewlett wants to tell Richard's story; to elucidate the seeming contradictions in his character and career; to explain him as no formal biography has done. To this end, he adapts part of the method of Thackeray. Given certain perplexing problems in Richard's career and given certain known facts, he extends them by inventions of his own. But he is not always consistent. He

suppresses where it is necessary to aid his invention.

However, in the main, he is guided by history or by the old chroniclers, even to the point of following William of Newburgh and Roger of Wendover in their account of how the Old Man of Musse sent letters to European monarchs vindicating Richard's name from any stain in the matter of the Marquis Montferrat's death. With certain historical facts upon which to build and with certain inventions of his own to trick out the romance, the question is what is Hewlett's attitude to be? He answers it in part himself:

"Differing from the Mantuan as much in sort as degree, I sing less arms than the man, less the panoply of some Christian king offended than the heart of one in its urgent, private transports; less treaties than the agony of treating, less personages than persons, the actors rather than the scene. Arms pass like the fashion of them, today or tomorrow they will be gone; but men live, their secret springs what they have always been."

In other words, he writes a biographical-historical-phychological romance. History

records that Richard was "a bad son, a bad husband, a selfish ruler, and a vicious man." If this were all of him, there would be nothing to write but a book of nays. However, there must have been more, historians to the contrary notwithstanding.

No man, entirely compounded of bad qualities, could have captivated the fancy of the people of his own time and survived as a heroic legend for centuries thereafter. It is Mr. Hewlett's business, therefore, to set forth the yeas.

This is done by citation of historic occurrences and by narration of imagined ones, by testimony of Bertran de Born and by extracts from the supposititious chronicle of the Abbot Milo. Richard is viewed from various stand points and always there is impressed the dual nature of the man,—the evil warring with the good. "He is ever of two minds," says De Born, "hot head and cold heart, flaming heart and chilled head. He will be for God and the enemy of God; will expect heaven and tamper with hell. With rage he will go up, laughing come down. Ho! He will be for you and against you; eager, slow; a wooer, a scorner; a singer of madrigals, ah, and a croaker after-

wards. There is no stability in him, neither length of love nor hate, no bottom, little faith."

This might be said to be the key to Richard as Mr. Hewlett sees him. He makes only one exception, in only one thing is Richard stable, —his love for Jehane of whom he says, "I will marry the French girl and love my golden Jehane until I die."

Love for the golden Jehane and love for the Cross—of these two inspirations Mr. Hewlett makes his story. The tragedy of Richard's life comes from the conflict of the two passions. If Richard desires to enter upon the crusade, he must needs have money; if he wants money, he must needs make alliance with some wealthy sovereign; if he makes such an alliance, he must needs do so by wedding the daughter of the gold-bestower.

Thus Richard is placed at the crossroads of his career. He must forego Jehane or the crusade. In his passionate way, he declares he will do neither. It is then that Jehane, worked upon by the Queen Mother, prevails upon him to give her up.

And, of course, it is largely out of this act

of self-abnegation on the one hand and disappointment on the other, that the subsequent chain of tragic events grows. Indeed, it is just here that the touch of artificiality comes in. In the "Book of Yea" everything goes well for Richard; he woos and wins the fair Jehane; he wins in the quarrels with his father; he succeeds to the throne of England and is crowned both there and in his French lands. The book ends with his agreement to wed Berengere.

In the "Book of Nay," everything goes wrong with Richard. His sacrifice of Jehane turns to dead sea fruit, and he puts his little Queen away. His crusade to the Holy Land is rendered abortive by the quarrels of his allies and associates, largely brought on by his own hasty temper and passionate pride. He does brave deeds in vain. He is finally forced to leave the land, to taste the bitterness of captivity; to fight for every inch of his way to his own domains; and finally to have as ashes in the mouth the knowledge that his life was probably purchased by Jehane's supreme sacrifice of herself.

Richard is presented as drawn by the chroniclers of his time. Holding forth on his

chosen way, he accepts from all and gives little. Men die for him, women break their hearts for him and finally—in this story—he dies, a man disappointed, a man balked in his greatest desires. Mr. Hewlett has managed to convey not only a vivid realization of his qualities as soldier and leader, not only a glimpse of his tempests of passion, but of the fundamentally religious nature of the man when touched and of the riotous poet heart of him, that French poet who exclaims in agony when he realizes the need of forgetting the woman he has given up: "Oh, Gaston, let us get to the South, see the sun fleck the roads, smell the oranges!"

The fair Jehane St Pol, whom the author says Richard loved from first to last, is his typical heroine. She is beautiful, as a matter of course. And even as her beauty corresponds to the Hewlett ideal, so her actions are of a piece with the Hewlett model. She is a woman all meek and lowly in her lover's hands, ready to make any sacrifice for him. She gives him herself without the sanctities of the marriage bond. When he would wed her and crown her Queen, she puts aside her honour for his good. When his life is in danger,

she sells herself to buy his safety. And this is one of the big blemishes in the book. It is not in accord with art and it is not in accord with life. That this girl, so passionate and yet in essence so pure, could sell herself, could become the plaything of the disgusting Old Man of Musse with his harem of concubines, could conceive an affection for the Oriental and bear him three sons,—this is too great a strain on credulity, too shocking to one's conception of what Jehane was like, too cheapening of her in every way. It is nauseous and not even the pleading of a friendly critic like Mr. Frederic Harrison can convince to the contrary; not even the citation that this was the wild 12th century of Heloisa, of Constance, and of the period when Richard was reported to have offered his sister in marriage to the brother of Saladin.

Perhaps the best character drawing in the book is that of the Abbot Milo, a Carthusian monk, abbot of the cloister of Saint Mary-of-the-Pine in Poictiers, lifelong friend of the king, and his almoner and chronicler.

Mr. Frederic Harrison says there was such a personage and that he wrote a book about Richard which has been lost. Mr. Hewlett

has breathed the breath of life into Milo and re-written his lost book. The Abbot stands before the reader a "red-faced, watery-eyed old man, rheumy and weathered well." He is learned in all the lore of his age; he is fond of rhetoric, of high phrases, and of long dissertations. He is angry at interruptions. He likes to read even kings and princes a lesson.

It is from the writings of this priest that Mr. Hewlett pretends to draw justification for his inventions. The extracts from Milo's supposititious history lend just the air of verity to the novel that it needed to help overcome scruples when confronted by certain aspects of the story. Mr Hewlett either tells a thing and then corroborates it from Milo's book, or else gives the extract from Milo alone.

Now as to the English of the novel. In the main, there are two ways of telling a historical tale. If one follows Scott, he gives the narrative partly in the English of today, but the dialogue in what is supposed to be the language of the period chosen. If one follows the Thackeray of "Esmond," one chooses the harder course. In "Esmond," Thackeray reproduced the English of Anne's day not only

in the dialogue, but also in the narrative proper. Mr Hewlett has used something of the method of both. His dialogue attempts to reproduce the spirit of the times.

There is none of the glorified bombast, for instance, of Scott's King. Mr Hewlett's Richard talks more like a human being of the 12th century. His language is that of the fighting Troubadour King, a language of poetic fancies, queer oaths, elliptical expressions such as men used in real life. The rolls and chronicles of Richard's time, to which Bishop Stubbs wrote such fascinatingly learned prefaces, have been studied by Mr. Hewlett with the greatest of care. From them he gathered something of the atmosphere of the times; something of the language that was then used; something of the manner of speaking. But he has not slavishly followed them. From the poets, from the dramatists of Elizabeth's day, from northern and provincial dialects, he has gathered good out-of-the-way words and has allowed them to filter through and colour his narrative with a quaint medieval tinge that makes it the proper setting for the dialogue. The narrative is thus modern, but with a suggestion of the antique.

One more point remains to be made. Perhaps the truest definition of Mr. Hewlett's "Richard" would be to call it a chronicle novel, even as ten out of 37 of Shakespeare's dramas are chronicle plays, in the strictest sense of the word. The play of this order applies to lay history the methods of dramatic narration. The chronicle novel such as Mr. Hewlett gives, applies to lay history the methods of novelistic narration. The chronicle play recounts what happened in the reign of a particular king, what incidents led to his accession, what episodes marked his fall or death. It is very much the same with the chronicle novel. The play tended to develop into one of three forms, —the comedy of manners, the romantic play, or the tragedy. "Richard," has nothing of the comedy of manners, but it does have the romance, and it closes upon a note of tragedy. In fact, in a sense, the whole book is a tragedy, the tragedy of the failure of a great lover and of a great crusader and king, of a man defeated by the cross currents of life and fate and passion.

Even in the best of the chronicle plays, it is not the plot which tells, but the episodes,

and such unity as they have comes from such figures as Hotspur, Richard III., and Henry V. moving through the various scenes and being affected by them.

In the chronicle novel, as in the play, many things happen, but the actions are mainly in sequence, because historically they did happen in just that order. They do not grow clearly out of preceding causes, such as are necessary in the novel conforming to the canons of the art. To overcome such defects, the chronicle novelist is put to the straits of inventing motives and causes in explanation of known historical happenings. Thus the prophecy of a leper impels Jehane to refuse to become Richard's Queen; Montferrat's death is purchased by Jehane selling herself, etc., etc.

The tendency is ultimately for a chronicle play to become what has been aptly termed "Sublimated melodrama." The melodramatic also often pervades the chronicle novel.

With these considerations, is "Richard" a success?

Mr, Hewlett's art of narrative was never truer. His battle pieces hold the interest to full measure. His death bed scene in Rich-

ard's tent moves to tears. His pictures of faraway places glow with the fervour of their faraway sun. His style follows suit. It is a "galliard" style, full, rich, high, and fantastic as suits the subject, but grave and simple when the situation demands. The novel abounds in tense dramatic situations. Its etchings of the great men of the past are superb, the three women, Alois, Berengere and Jehane are admirably contrasted throughout; their characters are revealed not only by their words, but by their actions.

But the book is not a success.

It lacks unity; it lacks a great central plot; the very division into the "Book of Yea" and the "Book of Nay" indicates this. A chronicle novel dealing with Richard should have him always as the main figure on the stage. But this is not the case here. Occasionally he is lost sight of while lesser persons claim the reader's attention.

There is still another fault. The book lacks verisimilitude. There are jarring passages. There is an unhealthy dwelling upon the passion of Berengere, bride but not wife. There is too great a strain upon credulity in the sac-

rifice of Jehane to the Old Man of Musse. This seems melodramatic, "stagey" and forced, rather than true to romance and to life. In short the book is a failure, magnificent but none the less a failure.

NEW CANTERBURY TALES.

IT sometimes almost seems as if the books in Mr. Hewlett's library tease him into trying his skill in treating subjects already used by acknowledged masters of literature. Scott's "Talisman" did not debar him from taking Richard as a hero. The myriad books about Mary, did not affright him from his purpose of setting forth the tragedy of the Scottish Queen. In 1901 he flung down another rather daring challenge to the critical by his "New Canterbury Tales," a title and subject sure to arouse the wrath of some of the professed Chaucerians and also of those who praise Chaucer without having read him.

Mr. Hewlett was not unaware of the criticism that would be heaped upon his head for his audacity. He was ready with his apologia. In fact, it is contained in the very first words of his prologue:

"Pray do not suppose that Chaucer's were the only pilgrims to woo the Canterbury way with stories, nor that theirs was the only road

by which to seek the Head of Thomas. His people may have set the fashion and himself a tantalizing standard of attainment; but that is a poor-hearted chronicler who withholds a tale because some other has told one well."

Omitting the unfortunate—and forced—comparison with greatness crowned by Time's verdict, the only fair test that should be made is the one in answer to the question: What of this work absolutely, without reference to anything that has been written on similar themes before?

And the best answer to the question seems to be the remark the London Athenaeum was moved to make when the book appeared, viz that "Mr. Hewlett, now that Stevenson is dead, is certainly the prince of literary story-tellers."

The book is a real contribution to literature and at least two of the stories are among the best things that Mr. Hewlett has done.

Having adopted a Chaucerian title, he also adopted the Chaucerian scheme. Each tale is such as the specific character, to whom it is credited, might have told, although the author says: "I ask you to be more concerned with the tales than the teller."

Chaucer's pilgrims started from the Tabard Inn, Southwark, and it is not clear whether the journey was to be made in one, two, or four days. They set forth on April 28, 1388. Sixty-two years later, on May-day 1450, Hewlett's pilgrims set forth from Winchester. There is no doubt as to the stages of their journey. They are carefully set down.

One of the superb gems of Chaucer's poem is of course the masterly prologue upon which so many commentators have expended their eloquence. Mr. Hewlett very wisely avoids the mistake of trying to do for his prose book what Chaucer did for his master work. There is a prologue, it is true, rather quaintly set forth in language that conveys a tone of the archaic, but it is swift and to the point.

The reader is made acquainted with the Prioress of Ambresbury in Wilts, born Touchett of Merton, a stately dame but with a tender spot for minstrels, young women, and boys. He meets Dan Costard, her confessor, so charmingly described as a "loose-skinned old man with mild blue eyes, coloured (as it seemed) by that Heaven which he daily sought." Then there are Mistress Mawdleyn, niece of the Prioress; Percival Perceforest,

page to Mawdleyn's father and lover of Mawdleyn; Captain Salamon Brazenhead, swash buckler, of whom more in a later chapter, and various commoners mentioned as a "Scrivener of London," Master Richard Smith, Mariner from Kingston-upon-Hull, and the latter's wife.

So much for the prologue and the characters, Now as to the tales they tell. Chaucer was a child of the Middle Ages. He was medieval in his style and in the turn of his phrases. He freely resorted to a mixture of the names and associations of his own times with those of the pre-Christian era. His morality was often the overstrained morality of the Middle Ages, as demonstrated in the famous tale of the patient Griselda. He was not above the superstitions of his time, as is shown in his Prioress' tale, one of those cruel calumnies against the Jews so current then and still so current even today in darkest Russia and Roumania. His naivete is perhaps not literary style so much as the tone due to the period in which he wrote. It was perhaps the tone of all writing men then, heightened in him by something peculiarly lovable and childlike. Mr. Hewlett has imitated these

things only in part. His tales are such as the Middle Ages rejoiced in. They avoid, for the most part, modern thought, colour and feeling, without attempting a distinctly archaic style. In fact, their style rather suggests than reproduces the manner of the Middle Ages.

If Chaucer holds up Griselda and Constance as the pattern of model women, Mr. Hewlett gives their sister in Alys. If Chaucer gives superstition in the story of the little child whose throat was cut by the wicked Jews because he sang so sweetly "O alma redemptoris mater," Mr. Hewlett, too, reproduces the feeling of that old time by his story of that other sweet singer, Gervase of Plessy.

After all, however, Mr. Hewlett writes in the present era. The tales he spins are too subtle to have come down from Chaucer's time. Their stroke is too swift; their management too scientific. They have a humour which ventures often very close to grossness, but always held in check by a proper regard for finer taste and by deep reverence for the Catholic mysteries. The art of their plot construction is too greatly dexterous and too finely poised to be anything other than that of a

writer who lives in an era that is heir to all the ages that have gone before.

Of the six tales given by Mr. Hewlett, one only has a definite source and that is Froissart, combined with a legend of the foundation of the Order of the Garter. The others are Mr. Hewlett's own. They are perhaps to be paralleled in the legends of the saints, in Italian novelle, and in ancient chronicles of medieval wars. They are the result of the author's wide reading of medieval literature. It is the learned scrivener who gives the tale of the Countess Alys; it is the man of religious fervour, Dan Costard, who tells the tale of the trials of the hermit Vigilas; it is the bombastic swashbuckler, Brazenhead, who relates a story of medieval Italy. Two of the stories, "The Half Brothers" and "Eugenio and Galeotto" are "Little Novels of Italy." "The Cast of the Apple" is such a tale as William Morris might have told.

The story of "Gervase of Plessy" is something like those one may read in the compilations of legends concerning the saints. With Chaucer's Prioress' story, it is a companion piece to the legends of Saint Hugh of Lincoln and Saint William of Norwich. There is a

jarring note in the story, however, that spoils all the effect of its studied simplicity. The blemish is the tone of eroticism in the semi-sane mothering mood of Sornia towards Gervase. One of the two notable stories of the book is the Scrivener's tale of the Countess Alys. "I propose a tale," says the Scrivener, "All in the manner of that noble clerk and fellow of my mystery Master Geoffrey Chaucer."

And again, "Although rhyme shall be lacking (for I am no rhymester for choice) I promise you the other elements of art, as balance, careful heed to longs and shorts, proportion, exquisite choice."

What the Scrivener says of his story, can truly be said of Mr. Hewlett's work. There is indeed balance, careful heed to proportion, an exquisite choice,—for this is a pearl of a story, perfect in its tone, medieval in spirit and denouement. Froissart tells something of this Alys, Countess of Salisbury; of how she defended her husband's castle of Wark while the master was a prisoner in France; of how King Edward, coming to lift the siege, remained to beleaguer the heart of the lady; of how she resisted him; and of how, later in his career,

he had her as his guest of honor at a great tournament. Legend tells that the Order of the Garter was founded in her honor when base-minded men sniggered as the king picked up the lady's dropped garter. So much for origins. Mr. Hewlett has given the story a setting of his own. He has filled it with medieval colour and spirit; he has drawn a noble portrait of Alys, greatly tried, greatly enduring, "who had a wild look, with some audacity and much innocent hardihood; as though like Taillefer at Senlac, she played with her virtue, tossing it up, but always catching it again."

With true artistic instinct, Mr. Hewlett has elaborated the old chronicles and the old legend into a tale of dramatic interest. There is the double theme of the lust of the King for the fair virtuous Alys, and of the humble, self-denying love of her by the poor scholar, Lancelot, tutor of her children. Lancelot, is an invention by Mr. Hewlett, as is also the death of the Earl of Salisbury and the plotting of Pandarus the First, Alys' base brother, and Pandarus the Second, Alys' stepson.

Throughout, without any undue emphasis upon the point, the tale is a noble vindication

of the steadfastness of the good wife, who embodies in herself all the medieval ideals of what she should be,—sweet, loving, virtuous, long-suffering, careful of her husband's honour, good name, castles, fiefs, and goods.

The most powerful story in the book, however, is an entirely new departure for Mr. Hewlett. "Peridore and Paravail" is an excursion into the horrible and terrifying. It is an examination of a mind diseased. It irresistibly calls up for comparison Flaubert's "La Tentation de Sainte Antoine" and is not unworthy the hand of that master in the study of the horrible and the bizarre. However, it is more compact, it is more easily understood by the many than Flauberts' work, and it is relieved by a love story of great sweetness and purity. It is filled from end to end with the shadow of the superstitions of the Middle Ages. "Old Legion" is a very terrifying figure. Witches perch on eaves of houses and gibber of their diabolical plots. All of the forces of evil strive to outwit mortal intenions and win souls from God. The blessed Vigilas was a hermit of Cauntrip, who dwelt in a hut by Bleme Barrow under the shadow of the Druse ring. He saw visions and did

marvels daily by reason of his fastings, his prayers, and his flagellations of the too rebellious flesh. He was forty and had led a saintly life for thirty years, when he found the babe whom he named Paravail and who grew up a slip of a girl whose hair was the colour of dormice and with feet lighter than a hare's. This Paravail was without a soul, for she was weaned after one month with a foster-mother whom Vigilas found for her. And so she grew up to be at once his torment and his delight. She was a wild thing such as Mr. Hewlett loves to depict,—one of those denizens of the forest who run with the hares, hide with the foxes, swim like the otter, are sib with all soulless creatures, alien only from men and women. And then the beginning of Vigilas' madness comes upon him. One moment the flesh that has been subdued for so long rebels, and he loves the girl's beauty. The next, he sees in her a device of the evil one to lure him to deepest Hell.

Into her little world there comes Peridore, the shepherd boy, her one month fosterling. They love, wildly, yet innocently, even as Aglae and Neanias. Indeed, there is quite a parallel in the relations between the two pairs of lovers.

It was Neanias who warmed Aglae's cold, who taught her human speech, who revealed to her that she had a soul, who rescued her from the terrifying attendants of Pan. So, in this tale, it is Peridore who rescues Paravail, not only from the fanatic tyranny of Vigilas, not only from the eerie scheming of the witches, but who takes her to the Holy Mount where there are those who find a soul for her, so that she will be a fitting mate for the sturdy shepherd lad who has loved her well.

With Peridore's advent, the madness of Vigilas reaches its climax. His soul becomes a battle-ground for angels and fiends. The angels tell him to let Paravail go, as youth is calling to youth. The fiends tell him to keep her for his own. He resolves to take her home. He will "look and long, but curse her; and love, but chastise; and fear, but dare her do me harm." And so this madman takes the girl into the hut where he keeps her prisoner.

It is at the height of his madness, when fright and starvation have rendered Paravail as one who is dead, that Peridore knocks Vigilas down and bears off the girl, away from the hermit and the wrangling witches whom

he hears in the woods, away to the Holy Mount. When Paravail has a soul, she sets forth with Peridore.

The story is one which, in its terrifying imagination and superstition, is medieval to the core. But there is something deeper than that in it. This story of a loveless hermit-saint, undone by his savage asceticism portrays a moving mental tragedy. Step by step there is shown the breakdown of a brain. Disease gradually destroys sanity until nothing but religious madness is left. It is horrible, but only as is the actual tragedy of diseased minds. There is a compelling sincerity in the picture that fills with pity. It hurts because of its very truth. It throws a flashlight into the darker corners of the human brain and shows the dangers that lurk when the delicate fibres begin to weaken. For the first time one begins to understand those mad eremites of the dark ages, their fanaticism, their flagellation of the bleeding flesh, their acts of dark savagery, seemingly unrelieved by any semblance of human feeling.

THE QUEEN'S QUAIR.

A BOOK about Queen Mary—if it be honest—has no business to be a genteel exercise in the romantic; if the truth is to be told, let it be here. * * * A hundred books have been written, a hundred songs sung; men enough of these latter days have broken their hearts for Queen Mary's. What is more to the matter is that no heart but hers was broken in time. All the world can love her now; but who loved her then? Not a man among them. A few girls went weeping; a few boys laid down their necks that she might walk free of the mire. Alas! the mire swallowed them up, and she must soil her pretty feet. This is the nut of the tragedy; pity is involved rather than terror. But no song ever pierced the fold of her secret, no book ever found out the truth, because none ever sought her heart. Here, then, is a book which has sought nothing else, and a song which springs from that only; called

on that same account, 'The Queen's Quair.'"

This, from the author's prologue, will serve to show that Mr. Hewlett was fully aware of the difficulties in his path; of the cry that would go up that he was treading in well-trodden paths, which had been pursued before him by men of no less rank in their respective countries than Scott and Schiller and Alfieri and Swinburne. It was a bold undertaking,—this one of making a story of the six most debated years in the reign of the most debated woman in history.

It was prefaced by words equally as bold. At one sweep, Mr. Hewlett waved away all those others who had attempted to make Mary live again, saying that they had missed the key to her mystery by failing to seek the feelings of her wild, passionate heart.

Following such an undertaking and such a preface, a veritable challenge to the critical, nothing could succeed and satisfy but the highest form of success. The venture was justified by the production of the most high-hearted, full-blooded, living book about Mary that has yet been written, a veritable and authentic masterpiece, presenting the author's splendid art at its highest and best phase and

putting before the reader an unforgettable picture of Mary and the crafty, scheming men by whom she was surrounded, deceived, and destroyed.

Mr. Hewlett, aside from his needful preparation for historical romance, has always had a bias towards history. So the work of delving into the books of this great epoch in Scotland's past must have been peculiarly congenial. Having read much, it then became necessary for him to forget much. It was necessary to retain only the great essential facts in Mary's story, and afterwards to pick out such details as were needful for the development of a moving, life-history. But something even more than this was necessary. It has been pointed out recently in the reviews of Hardy's criticism-compelling "Dynasts" that the author displayed a veritable cosmic vision, beholding all Europe spread out before him as on a map, with its armies and its battles seen as if they were the struggles of mites. Mr. Hewlett has displayed something of this cosmic vision—though on a lesser scale—in dealing with the Scotland of Mary's time. He, too, displays something of the larger irony, the greater satiric comprehen-

sion of the futility and the pity of it all. He sees these puppets caught up and netted by their fate; he sees them vainly beating against the bars and dashed to destruction; he pities and he compassionates, but at the same time he is as clear and as merciless as bare truth itself.

In his vision all the multiform events of this tumultuous, stirring, seething six years' period fall naturally into dramatic form, and with an art that conceals the effort and the intense study it must have involved. He has pictured the grey and dour Scotland which seemed to Mary, and rightly so, such a hostile land after her days in sunny France; he has drawn this slip of a girl as the pivot about whom were maneuvered the numerous intrigues of the time. To the half savage nobles she was the means by which they might secure lands and grab office; to the fierce, hot-gospellers she was an idolatress who followed the mandates of the Pope of Rome and, hence, a woman who ought to be sent to death and who, in the meantime, should be assailed from every pulpit and thwarted in every desire; to France, Spain, and Austria, whither she looked in vain for en-

couragement and support—one Catholic monarch appealing to the monarchs of the great Catholic lands—she was a mere piece in the great game of diplomatic chess they were playing for wealth and power; to the Pope she was an instrument that he might use in redeeming Scotland from the wave of Protestant loyalty that had swept over it under the compelling eloquence and power of John Knox; to the English Catholics she was the rose of their hope and, by that same token, rendered the object of Elizabeth's bitterest thoughts and of her cruelest vengeance; while to Moray, who looked through his fingers at every crime committed in his interests, she was the one person who served as a bar to the sinister ambitions of a bastard who coveted a throne.

Mr. Hewlett in telling this story has extenuated nothing, nor set down aught in malice. It is small wonder, however, that he has been moved to pity. Everyone, not a savage bigot, is drawn to a lass who finds herself with no trusty friends in a land where the priests of her religion are pelted with eggs, whose chaplains are bullied and stoned in the streets, whose rites are ridiculed. Mr. Hewlett's pity leads him to maintain that with

different surroundings and under different circumstances, the girl might have been developed into a better woman and Queen. He does not make the mistake of partisanship. He seeks to show Mary's character in the light of truth. His is not the Mary of Alfieri, nor of Schiller, nor Scott, nor Swinburne. To Alfieri, an Italian and a Catholic, Mary makes her appeal as a Catholic martyr and Queen. His Mary is typical of the productions of dramatists and novelists in Catholic countries. It is their conception of the ideal Catholic Queen, a martyr to her faith.

Sir Walter Scott, on the other hand, in his "Abbot" presents a portrait to be expected from a chivalrous gentleman and patriotic Scotchman. His Mary is a pathetic figure of romance, more sinned against than sinning.

In Schiller's drama, too, the pathetic side, the pitiful aspect of Mary is likewise presented.

Swinburne, on the other hand, paints a heartless, pitiless, corrupt wretch, a Gothic Venus, feeding on the blood of her lovers, a harlot-hearted creature who clips and kisses Chatelard even when she is planning his death; who is in love with Bothwell even before the

murder of Riccio and Darnley. Swinburne accepts as practically true the accusations made by Knox and Buchanan, the confession of French Paris, the revelations of the casket letters and sonnets. In no manner does he give Mary the benefit of any doubt. His huge plays constitute a romance written in dramatic verse, but marred by bias and often by long rhetorical passages, although in such scenes as Knox's denunciation of Mary and in the death scene of Darnley he attains a height of dramatic verse not often equalled in the 19th century.

To Scott the tragedy of Mary's career was her loss of the throne.

To Swinburne, it was the loss of her lover.

To Mr. Hewlett, and therein lies his truest inspiration, the tragedy consisted in the breaking of the queen's heart. Loss of a throne, of friends, of a lover were as nothing to this. So long as her heart maintained its dauntless Stuart courage, so long as she was self-reliant, brave, and high-spirited, she could face the world. Once her heart was broken, however, her world crumbled beneath her feet and she crept away a pitiful, beaten, broken thing to whom death were welcome.

Swinburne has insisted upon the fact that Mary, even in her girlhood, was not innocent. He has dwelt upon the fact that the French court of the Medicis was a wicked, corrupt place and that those, who attended it and dwelt in it, were perforce acquainted with wickedness, even when not evil themselves.

Mr. Hewlett has displayed true artistry by insisting upon the essential girlishness of Mary, upon her initial innocence. There are too many portraits drawn of her as the woman with stage tragedy-queen airs, rather than as the young girl, placed in exalted station, petted and spoiled, in love with brightness, gaiety and song; half French in blood and wholly French in temperament.

The chilling influence of the Scotland of the Renaissance period when Knox flourished is skillfully shown by Mr. Hewlett.

"The Queen's Quair" gives the atmosphere of Scotland. The book is filled with it. It colours the scenes. It colours his very style itself. In the second chapter of the first book the Scottish atmosphere is, as it were, the protagonist. The reader perceives how this grey Scotland with its fogs, its chills, its people so quietly and keenly watch-

ing Mary, scrutinizing the fine manners of her French gallants and yelling objurgations at her French priests, made her long for France. This young girl loves love, she loves smiles, she loves plaudits. She dresses in her prettiest, poses her most picturesque, and then some point at her, some shake their heads, none salutes her. They stare! "There is no love here," says the chilled lass. She laughs only twice from the time she lands on Leith shore until she rides into Holyrood-house.

The feuds between the Hamiltons, the Lennoxes and the Hepburns, the dominating influence of Knox, the hatred of popery and foreign finery are indicated. All the tragedy to come is felt in this chapter as inevitably as the doom of mortals is felt and foreshadowed, in Greek drama. And she so young to be so doomed! Look at her as Mr. Hewlett has painted her in that enchanting way he has when painting women:

"A tall, slim girl, petted and pettish, pale (yet not unwholesome), chestnut-haired, she looked like a flower of the heat, lax and delicate. Her skin—but more, the very flesh of her—seemed transparent, with colour that

warmed it from within, faintly, with a glow of fine rose. * * * The Cardinal, who was no rhapsodist of the sort, admitted her clear skin, admitted her patent royalty, but denied that she was a beautiful girl—even for a queen. Her nose, he judged, was too long, her lips were too thin, her eyes too narrow. He detested her trick of the sidelong look. Her lower lids were nearly straight, her upper rather heavy; between them they gave her a sleepy appearance, sometimes a sly appearance, when, slowly lifting, they revealed the glimmering hazel of the eyes themselves. Hazel, I say, if hazel they were, which sometimes seemed to be yellow, and sometimes showed all black; the light acted upon hers as upon a cat's eyes. Beautiful she may not have been, though Monsieur Brantome would never allow it; but fine, fine she was all over—sharply, exquisitely cut and modelled; her sweet, smooth chin, her amorous lips, bright red where all else was pale as a tinged rose; her sensitive nose; her broad, high brows; her neck which two hands could hold, her small shoulders, and bosom of a child. And then her hands, her waist no bigger than a stalk, her little feet!"

Such the girl whose beauty was to be marred by salt tears, whose boldness was to be crushed out of her, whose high courage was to avail her naught, who was to be the wife of a sodden fool and awake too soon to a complete knowledge of his folly, only to be the leman of a swashbuckling Hepburn and learn too late that she had thrown away everything in the world and received nothing in return.

"Richard" failed as a chronicle novel because of its divided purpose and its divided story. "The Queen's Quair" succeeds where "Richard" fails. There is in the bigger book no divided purpose. Mr. Hewlett has kept his eye on the one main point throughout,—a depiction of the gradual change in Mary's character; how it hardened; how she was on a continuous quest for a lover who would be absolutely true to her and at the same time be her master in all things; and how she broke her heart over the disappointment of it.

The book is, indeed, as Mr. Hewlett himself called it, a "tragic essay." From first to last, Mary is in the foreground. It is her thoughts, her actions, her impulses, her emo-

tions, her sayings, her sufferings with which he is concerned. If a chronicle novel is ever to be a success, this is it. Real history is in it. The real woman is in it. Real life is in it. If the reader does not know Mary after studying this book, he will never know her. There is nothing of importance omitted that the dry-as-dust historians have told us. There is much added that they have not presented, because it could come only from the direct inventive inspiration allowed to the novelist and the poet. Mr. Hewlett has been so careful as to his facts and so wonderfully successful in his inventions that he has presented a veritable human document. The novel follows the actual historical sequence and thus, in the main, presents a plot unrivalled by the invention of all but the supremest minds of the ages, while its series of dramatic situations are such as to call forth all the powers of the novelist in the depiction of the pitiful and the terrible, as well as the beautiful and the passionate. That is why this novel is so much truer than history books. History tells that certain men lived at certain times and performed certain deeds, glorious or despicable, as the case may be. History tells why kings

went to war and why kings were deposed. It tells something of the state of the people during the various events of which it treats. The reader may see some distance inside an era, but not inside the minds and hearts of the great actors in the comedies and tragedies of history. And that is where Dumas' boast about the functions of the historical novelist is noteworthy. For the historical novelist, when he does present a great piece of work, throws a search-light into the human heart. In this chronicle novel by Mr. Hewlett, with its very decided psychological tendencies, there is shown not only the heart of Mary, but the base ones of the knaves and traitors who ruined her life and career. It is made clear that her so-called intellectuality consisted in her girlish love of French songs, her Guisian passion for intrigue, and her Gallic wit, ready for most occasions, save when pitted against her dour Scotchmen. At the great crises of her life, it was not her intellectual processes that formed the main-springs of her actions. Personal passions—violent loves and hates, likes and dislikes—these were the things that moved her to take the steps that were ultimately to lead her to ruin. The

very things that made her appealing as a woman made her unsuccessful as a monarch.

Mr. Hewlett does not seek to extenuate her part in the murder of Darnley, nor her guilty passion for Bothwell. He depicts her as she in all probability was,—a bewildering, puzzling mixture of good and evil, of girlish charm and boyish bravado, of frankness and falsity, by turns loving and hating, fascinating and repelling, laughing and weeping; now, for policy's sake, pardoning her sworn enemies, now making savage promises of the terrible vengeance she would wreak on their heads. And despite all this, Mr. Hewlett, without the slightest hint of favouritism or partisanship, manages to convey the belief that if Darnley had been a red-blooded man instead of a whimpering fool, or if Bothwell had been her husband instead of Darnley, and had treated her well, there would have been a better Mary and a happier Scotland. He has shown how largely she was doomed to her fate; how her own training, how the Scotland of her era, and the men who dominated it, all tended to make her what she was. Every event depicted in the book works to that end. Every incident shows how some of the sweetness was

sapped out of her; how she began to meet treachery with treachery; how she plotted to foil the plotters; how she used those who would make her their instrument; how she, who was distrusted, began to suspect all around her, save a few women and some boys and girls,—until she made the fatal mistake of trusting Bothwell.

Six years wrought great differences in her. She was no longer self-reliant, the boy had disappeared from her nature, and she was all weak woman, the kind of woman who is meek in love's service, who places herself at the feet of the loved one, and is humble and timid and clinging in all the ways that woman can humble herself and cling. The picture of the queen uncrowned of her womanhood by desire long denied is not a pretty one. It is almost pathologic in its minuteness, in its terrible, scientific intensity.

Swinburne in "Bothwell" has given a glimpse of this period. Even Schiller places in the mouth of Hannah Kennedy, many years afterward, a reminiscence of that unhappy and unhealthy time.

Mr. Hewlett, steadfast to truth, depicts Mary, the queen all unqueenly, the woman all

unwomanly, a thing only of fevered, tortured desire,—hectic, animal, repugnant.

He believes as deeply as did the people of the Renaissance in the overmastering power and the important place of passion and desire.

Hear him, for a moment, on this point. It applies not only to this book, but to the "Little Novels," to "Richard" and to "New Canterbury Tales," to all of which critics have made objections because of certain passages:

"As to the Flesh: we are clothed in it, don't want to be without it, and cannot continue in life divested of it. I profess to deal with life, and do not see why I should shrink from speaking of it as it was, is, and will always be. The characters in my novels are men and women, and when I see them doing things which men and women do—kissing and mating, as well as praying and fighting, I say so and make no bones. I have never in my life been suggestive for the sake of lust, and never prurient. But I do not see why I should leave out one half of life, when I am writing for men and women who are alive."

There is no passage in Mr. Hewlett's work to which an honest critic can make objections on the score of fleshliness for its own sake.

The so-called fleshy episodes are all necessary parts of the stories in which they occur. So here in Mary's book, these passages, painful though they may be in many ways, are necessary to a comprehension of Mary's relations with Bothwell, are necessary above all to a fitting comprehension of that wonderful chapter, "The Bride's Prelude." They are necessary in order to understand the full force of the crushing blow which was dealt Mary when she finally learned that she had given up everything for him whom she deemed her true lover and strong master, only to find that once more she had been tricked; that Bothwell loved his bonny Jean Gordon and secretly called her wife, while publicly proclaiming his passion for the Queen. So powerful is Mr. Hewlett's art, so convincing is his narrative, that he leads the reader to believe indeed, that nothing that happens after this discovery is of moment to Mary.

He has not made the mistake of expending all his force of convincement upon the portrait of the Queen. The host of characters who played a part in the great tragedy are limned with clearness and distinctness.

The wiles of Lethington, the kingly man-

ner of Knox, the croaking of the ruthless Ruthven, the craft of Riccio; the spider plotting of the tall, pale, prim James, Earl of Moray, who looked through his fingers at what was going on around him; the burly Morton; the jaunty, wilful, laughing Bothwell,—these men are depicted with no more care than the foppish Chatelard, the roguish French Paris, the devoted and loving lad, Des Essars, Mr. Hewlett's own superb creation.

Their true characters are flashed out in a phrase, as when French Paris exclaims: "Oh, Monsieur de Moray, Monsieur de Moray! is not your lordship the archetype and everlasting pattern of all rats that are and shall be in this world?"

Think of the sinking ships Moray deserted, of how this trickster was always prepared with an alibi, of his absence when Riccio was murdered, when Darnley was hurled into eternity, think of these things and the rat-like character of the plotter is made manifest. Or consider how Darnley is revealed in a sentence: "Those bold eyes of his were as blank as the windows of an empty house." By such methods as these, not only is the man's stupidity shown, but all his other faults—the fool

in his folly, the weakling in his weakness, the loose liver in his license.

Going outside of history, the novelist heightens the interest of his book, increases its air of veracity, imposes his beliefs and inspirations upon the reader by a method something like that used in "Richard." Only here it has been perfected to such a pitch that it hardly seems artifice. Just as in "Richard" the narrative was at times carried on by extracts from Milo's work, so here in this novel the main source of information is the supposititious little volume: "Le Secret des Secrets," written by Jean-Marie-Baptiste Des Essars, a pale-faced wise-looking French boy whose history is sufficiently indicated by this:

"The Sieur Des Essars—a gentleman of Brabant—disporting in La Beauce, accosts a pretty Disaster (to call her so) with a speaking eye—"

This French boy, page to Bothwell, is bound over to the service of Mary while she is in France. He becomes her devoted servant, friend, and lover. He is supposed to be in close contact with the Queen's party from the day she sets out for Scotland until the day when she departs for Lochleven as a pris-

oner. His book, half confession, half diary, is called upon constantly for confirmation of the story. In it Mr. Hewlett has not only imbedded much historic fact, but likewise much that he has imagined of Mary. Not only is Des Essars quoted to show how the foolish Darnley referred to the "fond queen," but he gives an insight into the mental processes of the Queen, into the tribulations of her heart, into the passions of her naked soul. But Des Essars is not the only witness. Mr. Hewlett created him, having Nau partly in mind. He recreated French Paris. The histories tell something of what the rogue said when put to the torture. Mr. Hewlett's way is easier and more humane. Cross Paris' palm with a coin and away he chatters of his master Bothwell and of the Queen. The talk is stamped with the mark of truth, even as are the letters Mr. Hewlett has written for Bothwell and the extracts from the diary of the Master of Sempill. To have so absorbed the spirit of the bygone age as to be able to reproduce it in diary, in letters, in conversation, and in book extracts, is a veritable triumph of invention. It serves as an extension of known historic facts; it

bolsters the novel and adds to its clutch upon credulity.

The author is said to have revised and rewritten the novel four times. After a second and third reading of the book, some conception is gained of its richness and weight and worth, of the world of labour that was needed to compress even within the limits of this big volume something of the life of this big time. The careful student then begins to understand the genuine inspiration that made these Renaissance figures very much alive, that filled their veins, not with ink, but with rich, red, passionate blood. Mr. Hewlett's "Quair" is a nineteenth century masterpiece which need fear no comparison with the historical novels of his great predecessors.

THE ROAD IN TUSCANY.

WHEN it was announced in 1904 that the Hewlett book for the year was to be a monumental travel book entitled, "The Road in Tuscany," many were disappointed. Here was one of the finest writers of his day, taking his papers in "Quarterly Review," "Speaker" and the "Cornhill" magazine and extending them into two volumes.

There is little of the first, fine, careless, boyish rapture that so marked "Earthwork;" there is nothing approaching "Quattrocentisteria" or the studies of Ilaria and Bettina or the "Sacrifice at Prato." Instead, there is a maturer man, a more sophisticated traveller, and, likewise, one who has lost some of his illusions. However, Mr. Hewlett could still say the Tuscans are "the most alert, charming, intelligent, curious people in Europe." He could still affirm much of his old love in the credo:—

"This is the singular quality of Italy—a

land of the people never at one and never at rest, always fine in act, and always distinguished in its presentation—that at every turn of the road, and at every revolution of the centuries, she is able to stab you to the heart."

But if there is indeed, nothing in this work that quite distinctly challenges the contents of "Earthwork" for quality, there is yet much meat for enjoyment. It does what he himself has said in another connection are the three indispensables for a travel book: "it inspires travel, it illuminates travel, and it recalls it."

As always with Mr. Hewlett, the people of the country have been the main consideration. He has been content to allow Mr. Murray to point out the glory of museum after museum; to concede to Ruskin the right of pulpiteer; and to Mr. Grant Allen the power of the school master. He has been willing to allow Herr Baedeker to state mere facts for the traveller-in-a-hurry, for Baedeker "saw the museum, but I saw the custode of it, a very noble priest. He saw the fresco, but I its poor patient proprietress. He saw the inn and said it was a good one. So it is; but I saw the innkeeper's pretty daughter, and was

witness to the unuttered, unutterable passion of the waiter for her."

In other words, there is the whimsical, engaging Hewlett for guide and mentor, instead of the dehumanized cicerone, become a mere megaphone for the dreary recital of drearier statistics and historical dates. Incorrigible teller of tales, he has sturdily maintained in this set of books that the way to tell the history of the towns he visited is not to tell it—if the bull may be allowed. Instead, he says he must get at the biography of each town, each biography being a sum of the life stories of its citizens, of the "men who sat at its councils, ruled its markets, built its churches, painted its walls, and wrote its little books and sonnets; yes, and sang under its daughter's windows o' nights, and hoed its vines and pruned its olives, and urged its great pale oxen along its furrows." To get at these things, he has felt it necessary to leave the beaten path and take to the road, "the greatest leveller after death," colouring all alike with sweat and grime. And so he has taken as his exemplars in writing the work, the old road books of his grandfathers' day. And with the road come the joys of it, unflagg-

ing high spirits, a constant sense of the humourous in things, a delight in all he sees, an impatience with the pedants who wish to make the love of good pictures over into an exclusive cult to which mere Philistines are not to be admitted. And this feeling is reflected again and again in witty or humourous or fantastic sayings.

It is precisely these whimsical things, coupled with his expressed views on history, on art, and on literature, together with his little inventions scattered throughout the two volumes that make the work worth while. The reader may never go to Italy and may not visit Tuscan hill towns if he does go. Conceivably he may not be interested in the facts about these places, but as a student of Mr. Hewlett's books, he is interested in what the author reveals of himself.

Thus Mr. Hewlett once more proclaims his love for Dante. He does it in comments that are very expressive of his own personality. Here is one that contains just the quirk of style, just the strain of whimsicality, just the tang of character that anyone who reads Mr. Hewlett's work is quick to recognize, but which is so hard to define.

It affords another delightful example of how informing, how amusing, and how "contentatious" and creative a literary critic Mr. Hewlett would have been had he devoted himself to such work.

Speaking of Beatrice and Dante: "He loved this green-eyed girl, and, because he loved, freed his immortal part, and towered higher than any of the sons of men. For if our Milton heard God speak, this man dared look Him in the face, take his stand with Saint John and Saint James below the burning throne of Heaven, and see his beloved assumed into the very heart of Mary. This it is to be a lover. If he paid more than lovers' honour to the green-eyed girl, what did she not do for him? She gave him strength to soar, taught him the mystery of Beauty and Desire, 'imparadised his mind.' Who she was, or what, whether gentle or simple, maid, wife or widow, a beauty or a scold, tall or short, (I myself believe she was a little woman), it is no matter. She imparadised his mind. He repaid her with such sort as no woman, save the Queen of women, has ever received of man. But she had given him the keys to Heaven. It is enough for us to be sure that she was

lovely and good, had green eyes and died young. To which I add for my private contentation—that she was a little woman."

Thus Mr. Hewlett, when his real enthusiasm is aroused. But Dante is almost the only man in Italian literature who does it. He likes Dante because he is company for the out-of-doors- man as well as for the man who desires to ponder in the library. And that leads to the chief fault he finds with the other Tuscan writers. He complains that they tell him little of Tuscany and are not illuminative of Tuscans. They are indoor company and their books are library affairs. There is not enough wind and sun and sky in their books to suit him. The result is that in mentioning most of the Italians, whom many critics have agreed to call great, he plays the devil's advocate and very amusingly he plays it too, with a downrightness of opinion that brooks no denial, with a hardheaded conviction that they are small men, comparatively speaking, and so not worthy much time and study.

There is the same independence of attitude in Mr. Hewlett when it comes to examining the great pictures to be seen in Italy and also when it comes to differing with the art pun-

dits. He has very little respect for the self-appointed guides. Again and again, with almost a touch of personal grievance, he has his fling at them,—Ruskin, Grant Allen, Mr. Berenson. Right in the beginning of his book, he contemptuously says he knows the trend of modern art criticism which does not concern itself with the questions: "Did A paint this and was it worth painting?" but rather, "Who among all known or unknown painters may have painted such and such, hitherto universally attributed to A?" And when it comes to the subject of Ghirlandajo, he resents being called a superior Philistine when he waxes enthusiastic over the work of "the most Flemish of the Florentine painters."

"I do seriously maintain," he says in heat, "that pictures, statues, great churches being there, are to be treated as part of the landscape—like trees or waterfalls; that they are for convenience, not cult; that they are admirable for their use, not useful for the admiration they extort from us. It is good to admire, enthusiasm is above rubies; yet it is better to admire a man in his handiwork, than his handiwork in a man. Moreover—and this

is corollary—there is more, and better stuff than dilettantism in every one of us."

And so having demolished art critics to his own satisfaction, even though he has to adopt a few euphuisms to do it, he shows the courage of his convictions by launching into an apostrophe which recalls another of the masters who taught Mr. Hewlett some of the graces of his prose. Is there not the very echo of the gentle Elia in such as this? "Incomparable Ghirlandajo! Shrewdest, most humorous, inexhaustiblest of painters, what should we know of the great world of Florence without thee and thy twinkling eye? Hast thou missed not one? Where hast thou scrupled to place them, in what august company of gods and demigods? Who are those frost-bitten acquaintances of our Redeemer, these hard men in red who stand about while He suffers baptism or changes water into wine at Cana—who are they but Ser Luca and Ser Cosimo, and other stout oneyers of the counting-house and Mercato Nuovo?'

In these volumes Mr. Hewlett has given some of his thoughts on history, too. Indeed, he has written appendices which are in them-

selves little chapters on the history of the various towns, or rather "nations" as he prefers to call them. He has always had a decided leaning toward historical study.

He has stated that some day he expects to do some work in the way of historical writing. In the appendices in the volumes under consideration, Mr. Hewlett openly writes himself the pupil of Carlyle. His sentences are jerky, eccentric, often elliptical. There is lacking his usual music and in its place is a prose giving the very essence of history, but history in its bare bones.

In addition to Tuscan art and literature, he discusses the folk, who he says, are always more interesting than their work. In approaching this subject, he has two methods, the methods of the novelist outright, and of old George Borrow. In his first character, Mr. Hewlett gives various "Little Novels." There is, for instance, the story of Donna Berta and Ser Martino. They are the typical Tuscan Darby and Joan. He says it was the magnificoes who blew trumpets and levied wars, but it was its Bertas and Martinos who made Florence. And so he tries to draw them

—the thrifty house-wife guarding her husband's gear and presenting him straightlimbed sons and handsome daughters; and the industrious husband, advancing step by step to higher honours in the service of his Florence.

It was Borrow who showed that romance was not dead; that one did not have to fare far afield for it; that one could take the road in any country, and every bend in the long, winding, white way would bring its little comedy or tragedy.

Mr. Hewlett found this to be true. Let Borrow have his wonderful gipsies mingling the poetry of the good brown earth with canny talk of horses and pugilism. He has certainly given no more solid amusement than the reader derives from Mr. Hewlett's advance down the road to Pistoja. The latter found himself jostling with a sharp-faced, bristle-bearded countryman, carrying tools and a wickered flask of wine. The younger Borrow falls into talk with him. He learns that the people are pouring into the city to do honour to the relics of San Atto, the Bishop. Whereupon the Englishman gives his sad reflections to the brother of the road. They do these things

better in Italy. There is more reverence and more honesty in the reverence.

The Englishman is curious as to his companion's name. Of all the names in the world it is Gino Cancellieri! Whereupon Mr. Hewlett, having duly had a meditation about the history of Pistoja and its rulers, begins:

"'Your forefather, my dear sir,' I ended, 'was tyrant of Pistoja.'

"The last of the Cancellieri took this at first with great phlegm.

"'He may have been, for all I know,' he said; 'but my own father was a road-mender, and broke stones betwixt Piastre and Cireglio. He was famous for it. You have been walking on his metal this morning, I doubt, and permit me to say there is no better. Tyrant of Pistoja was he? Well, there's a trade for a man!' The humour of it now tickling him, he laughed gaily. I said that I considered it a less reputable trade than road-mending; but Cancellieri would have his laugh out now that he had caught it.

"'Why, it may be so,' he allowed, 'I don't care to dispute it. But what gravels me is the justice of it. My grandfather, as you may

say, walked soft-footed upon the sweat of the Pistolesi , and here are the Pistolesi doing the same by my father. Well, that's as good as a comedy any day.' "

There is no better place to stop than this. It is a charming episode charmingly told.

THE BRAZENHEAD CYCLUS.

SOME day there is to be a complete Brazenhead cyclus. Mr. Hewlett himself has promised it. There is a view of the redoubtable Captain in a story of Italy by him in the "New Canterbury Tales." In "Fond Adventures" there is the complete history of how he came to join the pilgrimage of the Prioress of Ambresbury; of his relations with all the persons mentioned in the "New Canterbury Tales;" of his services in Jack Cade's war; and, finally, of how he rendered certain assistance to Percival Perceforest, who becoming Lord Say, made the war-worn Captain, "Steward of the Manors of Westerham, Knockholt and Froghole with a reversion of the Office of High Bailiff of the Lordship of Sevenoaks."

In "The Countess of Picpus," published in Putnam's Monthly Magazine in April, May, and June, 1907 there is an earlier adventure of Brazenhead when England and Burgundy

were allied against France; an adventure in Provence, where Brazenhead masqueraded as the Count of Picpus, rendered a service to a nobleman and a lady in distress, and incidentally won for himself a mistress, proving the truth of an old rhyme of Boccacio's that there is kissing yet in a kissed mouth. In the very last paragraph of this story there is a promise of still others:

"I am learning it by staves at a time; it is but a portion of the great Brazenhead cyclus; and some day——"

In a letter concerning him there is a similar promise:

"Brazenhead is a standby. I keep him until I want him, and have a look at him now and then."

It is for these reasons that this chapter is adorned by Brazenhead's name rather than by the title of the next volume by Mr. Hewlett in the order of its publication,—"Fond Adventures."

It is not hard to see that Brazenhead is a prime favorite with Hewlett. Upon his name, as a peg, are ultimately to be hung many stories that have occurred to Mr. Hewlett during his study of the 15th century period

when England, France, and Italy afforded so much chance for romantic or ridiculous or picaresque adventure. Brazenhead, himself, is at once romantic, ridiculous, and picaresque. A swashbuckler who will really fight, a poet without letters, a user of foreign phrases without much knowledge of foreign tongues, a bombastic liar who delights in masquerades, he is a lineal descendant of those great figures in literature,—Falstaff, Bombastes Furioso, Tartarin, Cyrano and the swashbucklers of Dumas. Mr. Hewlett takes something from each of these. He adds to it characteristics culled from old chronicles, or created by his own fancy. Brazenhead is a plaything of Mr. Hewlett's. The author delights in him, pokes fun at him, burlesques him. He cannot rest with simple descriptions of him. He must needs caricature him out of sheer high animal spirits. Some day, mayhap, Mr. Hewlett will come to love him, will begin to approach him in graver and tenderer mood. It is difficult to know where to begin to describe this "free routier." Captain Salamon Brazenhead, late of Burgundy, formerly of Milan is a "lean man of six feet two inches, of inordinate thirst, of two scars on his face,

a notched forefinger, a majestic nose, of a long sword, two daggers and a stolen horse, of experience in various kinds of villainy, yet of simple tastes."

Here is the description of a nose that marks the possessor as own cousin to Cyrano:

"I prefer a paean on his nose, a trumpet, an ensign built on imperial lines: broad-rooted, full of gristle, ridged with sharp bone, abounding in callus, tapering exquisitely to a point, very flexible and quick. With this weapon of offence or defiance he could sneer you from manhood's portly presence to a line of shame, with it comb his mustachios. When he was deferential it kissed his lip; combative, it cocked his hat. It was a nose one could pat with some pretense; scratched, it was set on fire, you could see it smouldering in the dusk. Into the vexed dabate, whether great noses are invariable with great men, I shall not enter. Captain Brazenhead was great, and he had a great nose." That, of course, is a cartoon in words, nothing more, nothing less.

Brazenhead is a boaster. He tells his hearers that kings are his familiar divinities, dwellers upon his very hearthstone. Once launched upon a sea of lies, he will declare that he is

the seventh son of a seventh son, will boast of ladies' favour, will tell of quarrels with the Pope at Avignon. He will confide that Sir John Falstaff was his friend and that he knew the king well and called him "Harry."

In his talk he will use scraps of anecdotes, choice phrases from various tongues, classical allusions that will make his hearers think him learned, until they see him adroitly concealing the fact that he can not read.

Now all this makes him the routier of the 15th century to be met with in ancient chronicles, raised to the Nth power of caricature. With one subtle touch, however, Mr. Hewlett gives a glimpse into the deeper heart of the man, of him who befriends young lovers, who strives for their joy and masquerades for their safety. The magnificent lies, the studied attitudes, the strange caperings of the lean, hairy soldier are those of one who is a poet at heart, who dramatizes himself in episode after episode. This mercenary, who loves the clink of gold and who can give the greatest pains to the conquest of a serving maid whose pretty hair touches his fancy, is so much of a poet and nature lover that a field of cowslips sends him into raptures: "My fresh beau-

ties! My dairy-delights," he cries, "I would as soon trample my mother's grave as your wagging golden heads."

He who loves flowers with a poet's and child's clean delight is something more than a cartoon routier of the Middle Ages. Some day, when age has burned some of the lust out of him, when his blood has cooled, when his brain is less inventive of bombastic fictions, the inner core of Salamon will be revealed There are stories of love and war in his career, one may be sure. And when the picture is complete, when the last chapter has been written, it will be discovered that the cartoon man has a heart, that he has something more than a figure at whose contemplation "fat laughter holds his sides."

"Fond Adventures" contained in addition to the tale about Brazenhead, three other stories. "The Heart's Key," a tale of troubadour France, and "Buondelmonte's Saga" and "The Love Chase," two more little novels of Italy. "The Heart's Key" is a light thing in Mr. Hewlett's romantic vein.

"The Love Chase" is a little comedy which goes dangerously near to tragedy. It is a

saga of Renaissance Italian poets, condottierri, and great churchmen,—in their pursuit of one who "is rather young, very pale and who partakes of the nature of a dove."

After all, however, "Fond Adventures" marked no new achievement by its author; and represented him in no new line of work.

THE FOOL ERRANT.

IN "The Fool Errant" the author bids good-by not only to the old times of the Renaissance, but also to much of the former Hewlett manner. The novel is a story of 18th century Italy, filled with the tone and colour of that period.

It is not a little singular that in commenting upon the probable inspirations of the book, none of the commentators mentioned Beyle. Mr. Richard Holbrook, writing in the Bookman in 1906 on "Some probable sources of Mr. Hewlett's Fool Errant" laid especial stress upon "Don Quixote." He saw in the hero another Don; he saw in Aurelia another Dulcinea, idealized in the brain of the worshipper; he saw in the little peasant Virginia another Sancho Panza.

Still another saw in Strelley of Upcote a Joseph Andrews at large in 18th century Italy, instead of 18th century England. None of the critics seemingly remembered that some years ago Mr. Hewlett wrote an eloquent and en-

thusiastic introduction to a new English translation of Beyle's "La Chartreuse de Parme," in which he declared it as his sober belief that this novel was the greatest France had produced. It is in this introduction that he speaks of the hero Fabrice as a "divine Italian fool salted over with French wit." Copying this, one might say that Strelley is a divine fool, guided and protected by a dewy innocence almost proof against worldliness. It is no reflection upon Mr. Hewlett's art to surmise that something of Cervantes, something of Fielding, and something of Beyle was in his mind when he conceived this story.

If you take an "innocent abroad" like Joseph Andrews, endow him with the dreams of the Don, and set him atilt against the Italy Beyle loved, you will have something of which "The Fool Errant," is all compact. Only something, however. For to the compound you must add Mr. Hewlett's romanticism, his own unique way of saying things, his own peculiar conception of woman. In comparing the hero of "The Fool Errant" with the heroes of the three acknowledged masterpieces, it is well to remember the attitudes the various creators adopted toward their creations.

Cervantes began by poking fun at his Don and ended by loving him.

Fielding began and ended by laughing at his Joseph.

Beyle, the dry psychologist, throughout maintained the tone of the scientific demonstrator who aimed only at getting at the truth without palliation and without suppression.

Mr. Hewlett, different from all of them, begins and ends by loving his fool. He laughs at him sometimes, but the tears are never far away.

In some respects, it would be easy to compare Mr. Hewlett with Beyle, whom he admires so enthusiastically.

Psychological phenomena absorbed the attention of Beyle. It has been said that "as the observant traveller, as the student of old chronicles, as the author of novels and stories, he was a psychologist and that alone."

This is becoming increasingly true of Mr. Hewlett. He began by confining himself to tale-telling. He has advanced in "Richard" and "Queen's Quair" and in "The Fool Errant" to the ranks of those authors who are also engrossed with psychological phenomena.

With Beyle, there were two passions, the love of war and the love of women. This is true of Mr. Hewlett in his books. Both of them love Italy and its women and its life in the 15th and 16th centuries.

But there is also a contrast between the greater man and this author. Beyle never wrote a line of poetry and had no ear for rhythm.

Mr. Hewlett not only writes poetry, but approaches all his studies as does a poet and in his methods of composition trusts, like the poet, to that divine fury which is called inspiration. Having stuffed himself full of a subject, he then pours out his broodings and imaginings. Beyle has the dry manner of the Code Civile, the matter-of-fact manner of the scientific investigator. Mr. Hewlett is carried away on the wings of his imagination, his style takes colour from its subject, sombre in tragedy, lightsome in comedy. He appeals both to the eye and the ear. Beyle appealed to neither.

Mr. Hewlett is intensely personal in his attitude in his stories. Beyle is quite the reverse.

George Brandes says that Beyle's books

contain "the purely extrinsic Romanticism of their day in the shape of disguises, poisonings, and assassinations, prison and flight scenes, etc."

It was the memory of some of these externals of romanticism, perhaps, that influenced Mr. Hewlett to employ similar episodes in "The Fool Errant." Indeed, substitute "The Fool Errant" for "La Chartreuse" and Mr. Hewlett can be allowed to describe the Italy of his own book as well as that of Beyle:

"'La Chartreuse' depicts the Italy of the 18th century, the Italy of faded simulacra, of fard and hair powder, of cicisbei and curled abbati, of petits-maitres, of the Grand Dukes of Tuscany, of Luca Longhi. For the comedian of manners this is the time of times, since manners seemed all, and Italy the place of places where manners have always been more than all. There was matter for a Moliere, matter for a Hogarth (and Longhi took of each); but there was something over. De Stendhal bringing the wit of one and the irony of the other up to be fed, brought also that something over which neither of these had—dauntless appetite for romance, the arbitrary

dealing—cet air de maitrise et ce beau nonchaloir—of his own genius."

It is in this particular Italy that Hewlett places a story that is at once a comedy of manners, a picaresque romance, and a splendid study of character. It is a comedy of manners in that it shows the complications which grow out of the actions of the innocent Englishman set in contact with a people whom he does not understand. It is picaresque in that it is an Odyssey of Strelley's wandering from Padua to Rovigo, from Rovigo to Bologna, from Bologna to Pistoja,—in fact throughout all the Tuscan lands that Mr. Hewlett loves so well. It is a tale of an Odyssey through monasteries and hospitals and prison houses, of picaresque adventures with highwaymen, with thieving priests, with ragged player-folk, with peasant girls. It is a study of character because from the first to the last the comedy and the adventures only serve to throw into relief the mental growth and development of him who first viewed Italy with the uncomprehending eyes of a child and who wound up by understanding a great deal and loving yet more. The book somewhat recalls "The Forest Lovers." Each is a tale of

chivalry, the one in an age of chivalry, the other in a so-called age of reason. Mr. Hewlett has been peculiarly happy in his scheme. To have set Strelley adrift in the England of Pope and Swift, would have been to have lost much. But you take this Francis, a lad of 21, "eldest son and third child of Squire Antony Strelley of Upcote, a Catholic, non-juring recusant, stout old gentleman in Oxfordshire;" give him plenty of money in his pocket and books of poetry in his valise, make him good-looking, good-tempered, with blue eyes and a notable chin, make him too serious for laughter and too innocent for sin; you take him and turn him adrift in pagan Italy where he understands the people not at all and where they at first totally fail to understand him and what do you have?—sundry and exciting adventures; sundry love affairs in which he alone is blind; troubles amany, and finally that peace which comes with understanding.

At the beginning it is possible to say of Strelley what Brandes has said of a somewhat similar character in German fiction: "He is repeatedly saved from temptation simply by his ignorance and inexperience. He never realizes what is going on around him. Things

happen to him without his doing any thing to bring them about. He is the central figure of a group of characters who all pursue callings which leave them as free as he is himself."

It is only when he is no longer free, only when he becomes involved in the lives of those about him, that his eyes begin to open. It is this which makes the author's conception so difficult. Strelley comes dangerously near to being an impossible character. It is one of Mr. Hewlett's achievements that he does not allow Strelley to lapse into a mere burlesque figure.

This young dreamer, thinking no evil, has always maintained that "women are as far above our spiritual as they are fatally within our material reach." When, therefore, he is thrown into contact with the pretty wife of his host and guardian, Dr. Lanfranchi, he is content to adore her. He seeks no farther and gets nothing else. He keeps as holy relics little trifles of hers—a hair ribbon, perhaps, a little worn slipper. For her sake he learns Italian. He reads the Italian classics with her. He is richly rewarded for his devotion when he may kiss her hands. Finally, the innocent

tells her he loves her. To this Italian woman to whom love means deep passion, he says prettily: "I am at my prayers, in my church, before my altar. Your eyes are the candles, your heart is the altar stone. I kneel——"

The exquisite irony of this situation is that while hearing the poetical rhapsodies of Strelley as he puts his Aurelia upon a throne and worships her, the reader is also gradually and slyly taken behind the scenes by the author. He peeps into Aurelia's heart and sees her for what she is, desirous and denied; provocative, full of allure, and yet deemed a saint; a trickster and yet held for betrayed; a passionate Italian woman, bored to extinction by her husband, and yet dreamed of as a loyal, loving wife. It is only after many misadventures and misunderstandings that it comes to Strelley with a shock that his Aurelia is no Beatrice; that he has been held for a fool, indeed, and that he has behaved like a Galahad where he was expected to act like a Lancelot. It comes to him like a plunge in icy water to hear the dry Italian common sense of another woman in commenting upon his actions: "If this is what comes of reading your Dante, I advise the 'Song of Solomon.'

I have never opened the 'Divine Comedy'—still less the 'Vita Nova;' but I consider the author a donkey, and am sure that was the opinion of his Donna Beatrice."

Now what is the beginnng of this folly? Simply this, that on the night Strelley avowed his boyish love for Aurelia, he remained too late in her apartments and heard the formidable Lanfranchi coming up the stairs. In utter confusion he was hustled into a cupboard, so that he could slip away afterwards unheard and unseen. Now, while the saintly Aurelia—embryonic Cleopatra—was wheedling her husband into a good humour—it came upon the fool in the cupboard that he had wronged this lady by his avowal of love. Ecco! he would step out of the cupboard and tell this half-appreciative husband that he is wedded to the youngest of the angels. No sooner conceived, than done! Here is room for a pretty piece or comedy and Mr. Hewlett has lost none of his chances in the telling. Galahad is kicked out by the angry professor. Strelley with his body sore, but with his eyes still close-shut to the truth, dreams of but one quest in life, a foolish and quixotic quest, to seek out Aurelia and restore her to her

lord. This quest of Aurelia takes him all over Tuscany. He consorts with thieves and the lowest of the low, without smutching his soul. He peddles crucifixes. He falls in with the formidable Fra Palamone, a vagrant and criminal churchman. He joins the strolling players. He sees the inside of prisons and hospitals. Restored once of twice to the position he could occupy by right, he lives for a time in the great world of polish, and of smiling corruption, of cynical noblemen and their clever mistresses, only to disappear once more and take up the humble work of carpentering in Lucca. Of course, in the end he finds Aurelia and disillusion, but before that he finds her who is to count finally for the most and best in his life,—Virginia Strozzi, a half-starved peasant girl. Now, amid all these adventures, his character gradually takes on true virility. He gradually acquires the deeper wisdom. It is Virginia who teaches him much,—the service that true love gives, the pains it will endure, the sacrifices it will make. Mr. Hewlett manages through Strelley's wanderings not only to paint a picture of 18th century Italy in its manifold aspects

of high and low life, but how these things affect Strelley himself.

Strelley differs from other Hewlett men in that service women give him does not seem the main thing in the world. For him there is something more in existence than love adventures. He has a gallant conception of life and of rules of conduct; religion to him is something more than lip-service. With proud humility he can say:

"I have been bare to the shirt and yet proved my manhood, beaten like a thief and yet maintained myself honest, scorned by men and women and yet ready to serve my fellows, held atheist by the godly and yet clung to my Saviour's cross."

Virginia Strozzi is another of the typical Hewlett women. She is beautiful. She is content to serve her heart's lord. She is meek, she is lowly, she is satisfied to endure hunger for her lover's sake; to suffer disgrace for him; nay, to sacrifice her very womanhood for him.

She is described as handsome in a fine, thin way, but the author is not quite consistent in his portrait, for later in the book when Virginia is gowned in borrowed finery, he tells

the reader that she looked the patrician with her "refined beauty." Futhermore, he allows her to quote poetry, and to speak of "pietistical aptitudes." Such things as these are not in character. They produce a false note, the more so as Virginia says to her lover: "I am a little peasant and shall always be a little peasant." This statement by her is true. Where the author does not intrude, she has the peasant common-sense and the peasant honesty and loyalty. Nay, she even has a gift of altruistic sacrifice of self which Mrs. Edith Wharton avers is not characteristic of the Latins.

The other important and dominant character in the book is Fra Palamone. There are some figures in the Hewlett novels that are purely literary. They are drawn from books rather than from life. There is a certain diabolical cleverness expended upon their creation but, however hard the author tries, the reader is never quite sure they could have an existence outside of romance.

Palamone is a figure in whom Stevenson would have delighted. Palamone boasts: "I am known all over Tuscany for the most wheedling, good-natured, cunning, light-fin-

gered and light-hearted old devil of a Capuchin that ever hid in St Francis' wound * * * * the waxing moon sees me skipping, and you will no more keep me long off the road than your cur upon it. I must be out and about * * * * with a nose for every naughty savour and an ear for every salted tale."

His wit is of the order of Chaucer's Pardoner. A peddler of relics, he pokes fun at his trade.

This laughing, joking Capuchin can be grim enough, sardonic enough, savage enough when occasion requires. He will serve in any way for gold. He will kidnap a lad whom the authorities wish out of the way, or act as pander to a nobleman's lust. He will be blithe companion or tyrannical master; savage opponent or skilful nurse. All in all, Mr. Hewlett's hand never drew a firmer, clearer picture of a remarkable character, but again—ungratefully—did Palamone ever exist, and if so was it in 18th or in 15th century Italy?

On the whole, "The Fool Errant" is a charming book, producing in bulk the impression that it is what it purports to be,—the memoirs of Francis Strelley, written in the 18th century.

Mrs. Edith Wharton holds that Mr. Hewlett's methods are too positive and too strenuous for a novel dealing with the 18th century, a century of nuances.

"Colours had paled," says she, "voices been lowered, convictions subdued; in Italy especially, if one may trust the social records of the day, people lived au jour le jour, taking pain and pleasure lightly, and without much sense of the moral issue."

Mr. Hewlett has shown people taking pain and pleasure lightly,—Giraldi at his best, Aurelia before she is thwarted,—but he has also chosen to show that human beings are very much alike in all ages when their strong feelings are aroused. The mellow humour of a Goldoni, the urbane elegance of an Alfieri may determine the tone of a literature, but they do not determine the expression of a passion.

THE STOOPING LADY.

ALL of these novels possess in common at least one characteristic, that of recalling the writings of other authors. This suggestiveness, however, is much stronger in some classes than in others, Sometimes it is a feature of style; often it is a similarity of incident, or a likeness in character drawing; now and then it is safe almost to say that a certain personage could not have been created, had it not been for the existence of some other novelist's work; and occasionally striking parallels of considerable length can be pointed out between him and others."

This passage in a recent book concerning George Meredith, might, with slight modifications, be applied in certain cases to Mr. Hewlett. It has been pointed out in the course of this study how Mr. Hewlett has time and again challenged comparison with great names in literature. So, in 1907, when "The Stooping Lady" appeared, Mr. Hewlett was universally called a Meredithian.

In certain surface ways there was undoubtedly a resemblance to the great man's work, But after all, "The Stooping Lady," is the output, not of a censor of his age, not of a cynical satirist, not of a castigator of sentimentalism and of egotism, but of a poet and romanticist to whom there is nothing so beautiful in the world as the love of lovely woman.

Is there a complex story in "The Stooping Lady," a plot with its devious interwindings and complications, such as Thackeray and Dickens and Meredith have given? Bared to the bones, as it were, the novel is a series of incidents:—Hermia Mary sees a butcher fighting a pair of tipsy young lordlings; she learns that he is imprisoned for resenting the staking of his horse; she acts upon a quixotic impulse and goes to his shop to apologize for the wrongs her relatives have inflicted upon him; she is wooed by violets sent by an unknown giver, and falls in love with him who conceived the poetic thought; she meets her lover and acknowledges him her lord; she hears him speak at a reform meeting and is rescued by him when a melee ensues; she stands by his side when he is put in the pillory for inciting

to riot and leaves just before a stray,—or is it a purposed?—bullet kills her lover.

That is the bare, gleaming skeleton of the story! It takes the true artist to clothe on the outlines, the poet to give it colour and beauty, the born creator to make it the vivid, entrancing thing it is. The book is a far cry from "Evan Harrington," with which it is so often compared. Rose Jocelyn stooped to Evan Harrington, just as Hermia Mary sought to stoop to David Vernour. The one gives the viewpoint of the aspiring tailor, the other that of the stooping lady. "Evan Harrington," in all human probability suggested the theme of the later book, but they are different in purpose, different in treatment, and different in effect.

Harrington is a satire from beginning to end. Meredith, the fun-maker, Meredith the castigator of human frailties, Meredith the farceur, Meredith the cynical observer of life, here allows himself to revel. The Countess de Saldar, matched in English fiction only by Becky Sharp, is pilloried for all to see and her lies are exposed one after the other with ruthless skill. Harrington himself is pinned to a card and allowed for a time to squirm. Read-

ers are cynically shown that humans are all very much alike under the skin,—gentlemen are often innately vulgar; vulgarians are often gentlemanly. If Meredith displays himself the social satirist, Mr. Hewlett places himself on record as the ardent republican, as the man who scorns social caste.

How poor a thing is Harrington when compared with Vernour! Harrington would be a gentleman. Vernour proclaims himself a man. Harrington grows through his contact with the nobility of Rose. Vernour is full grown, but displays his best side when there is a call for it in the wooing of Hermia. Rose, agreeable figure that she is, does not win love as does the Hewlett heroine. Rose scorns tradesmen. She sneers at them. Only by degrees does she accustom herself to the fact that Harrington is not born a gentleman. She is ready to believe base things of him, attributing them to his blood. She is ready to marry some one else when her family urge the advantages of position and wealth.

Not so with Hermia Mary, hot little rebel by reason of her Irish father and the pretty mother who broke with her family to elope

over the garden wall with her lover. No sneers at tradesmen come from Hermia's lips!

"He's the butcher, miss."

"Oh then that was he—that young man—"

"Yes, miss."

"And who were the other two, the two cowards attacking him?"

It is intimated that they were gentlemen and were drunk, something to be taken into consideration.

"Pooh!" answers Hermia. She is not afraid of the people, nor does she scorn them. She speaks of her fellow passengers on a coach to London from the north and as one who knows them well. This girl is the elemental woman, passionate, essentially feminine, true as steel to the man she loves, knowing no social barriers and no qualms. She stands ready without question to give up for her chosen lover everything woman holds dear; nay, she does give up her dear-held pride. She endures for Vernour; she suffers with him.

The canvasses are different in the two books also. "Harrington" has many figures. There are John Raikes, the Cogglesby brothers and the Great Mel himself to recall Dickens and his methods. There are also a host of minor

characters. On the contrary, the vital figures in "The Stooping Lady" are comparatively few. It was not without reason that an English reviewer suggested that the book might well have been called "Lady Morfa." The tale, such as it is, deals with the loves of Hermia Mary and Vernour, but the figures revolve around the impressive one of the old dowager, a perfect character, sister to those in the pages of Thackeray.

"The Stooping Lady" is rich with many things Mr. Hewlett has taught himself. Modern though the style of it may be, comparatively free from the mannerisms that appealed to the artist in him, it yet abounds in the best things he has always given,—beauty of phrasing, nimbleness of wit, delightful dialogue, and care in character drawing. With the wisdom that has always marked his work, he has chosen a period rich in colour, 1809—when national consciousness and class consciousness were both at their highest point in England; when Napoleon was still something more than a bogey to good Englishmen, when a great deal was being heard about the rights of franchise and the rights of man.

This stir in the souls of men is deftly in-

dicated. There are hints of the growling of Hazlitt. Cobbett appears and there are imaginary quotations from him. A glimpse is caught of Parson Tooke, that "hoary old spider." There are faint echoes of the battles between Whigs and Tories.

It is precisely at this time, when men are most passionately alive to the questions of caste and human rights, that Hermia Mary Chambre of the house of Caryll, Lady Morfa, her grandmother, and David Vernour play out their little drama of human love and sorrow and suffering.

And first as to Hermia herself. With what a sure touch and with what perfect ear for music, by the way, Mr. Hewlett christened her. Hermia Mary! Hermia Mary! the reader rolls the sweet syllables on the tongue, just as did her lover. And what infinite pains Mr. Hewlett has taken to make her credible, to make her alluring to the reader. The novelist himself in his own proper person describes her; then as Vernour saw her and Captain Ranald, Lord Rodono and Lord Sandgate,—lovers all. Then from another angle there are glimpses of her in the diaries of Mervyn Touchett and the gossip of Pink Mor-

daunt. Lastly she is seen in her own conversation and in those letters which drip with her personality, her fun, her wit, her deep feeling. Her bright, brave spirit when it is moved to action, her nobility of soul when she is touched, move the author to poetry. Nothing less than poetry will suffice her admirers in describing her. Even Pink Mordaunt, club gossip, is touched by her girlish gallantry. It is necessary thus to expend treasure of words upon her creation. Otherwise the story would have lacked convincement. It needed all the preliminary groundwork to prepare for the essential poesy of that romantic garden scene in which she "seals her indentures." It needed all the persuasive powers of the author to make his readers forget the butcher in her lover.

She is endowed with beauty, with the hot colouring and the dark eyes of her father, with the dark tresses of her mother's race. Each of her lovers sees something of her physical charm. "She's got eyes like a midsummer eve—eyes with fires dancing in 'em—eyes alight," exclaims one.

She has, too, a pretty and uncommon wit. The author is not content with saying that

she possesses this gift. He gives proof of it. Her early happy letters abound in it. She is met by a row of flunkies at her grandmother's home: "A giant to each door, and a row of white-headed, flaming-breeched giants in the gallery; a groom of the chambers to herald any silly errand to grandmamma—vexatious, Mary! I feel like a parcel from the country—fresh butter, perhaps,—handed about from man to man, from coach to coach and delivered at last, greasy and thumbed, to my purchaser."

Or, again, on the eternal and absorbing question of clothes, telling of what she saw at a rout:

"My sweet cousin, you never saw such gowns, or such absence of gowns—literally abandoned! Mrs. Fancourt was there, like Venus rising from the sea—happily somewhere near the waist line she thought better of it and the rest remained under muslin."

But beauty can be shallow and wit can be heartless. This girl is neither shallow nor heartless. She is noble,—noble in the better meaning of the word, not in the vapid sense employed by the aristocrats by whom she is surrounded.

This is what is to be expected from a girl so deeply and reverently in love with a father who spoke to her thus wisely: "I see you a woman grown, my child; I see you a lover. Manhood—womanhood—and the call of the heart between; you will never be false to that. Love worthily, love well, love the best. Love truth, love justice, my Hermia Mary; hate like the devil those three children of his—Cant, False Privilege, and Treachery to the Truth that is in you." And again: "If you stoop, Hermy, stoop nobly."

When the time came, despite the creed of her caste, despite the protests of her family, despite precedent, she knew her own heart, she knew what she had to give and what she chose her butcher hero to take. There was no faltering. She summed herself and her story up in her own beautiful words: "Either one loves or one doesn't; either one is loved, or is not. And if one is loved in so beautiful a way that must mean the lover is noble. And if one loves—even if one loves an impossible person, as you say—if one loves with all one's heart, and is grateful, and is humble—there can be no harm. At least, I can see none."

Such is Hermia Mary, a greater than the

fair Jehane, because her conduct is more explicable and more convincing; in some ways a greater than Queen Mary, because she is entirely the author's own, with no groundwork of history on which to build.

Over against Hermia's character, the author has set that of Lady Morfa, a masterly portrait in a different style. Old where Hermia is young, a defender of caste where Hermia wishes to break down the barriers, she is brought into collision with the girl throughout the book. How like a Thackerayan dowager she is: "In person she was thin, not tall, and very much like an eagle, with a nose sharp, bony and prominent, with eyes black, hard, and deeply set, which were capable of an unswerving, unblinking and rather terrible scrutiny of persons and things. She could blink them too, bitterly when she chose; and her lips, which were thin, had a way of twitching very elfin to behold. Lastly, she stooped to a crutch, called you 'My Dear,' said exactly what she pleased, never concealed her opinions, and was absolutely candid as to her tastes, which were coarse, and her abhorrences, which were three. I have mentioned

them before: enthusiasm, slackness of fibre and treachery to Family."

Such was this great Whig lady, "a Whig of the Whigs, dotting all the i's in the sacred words British Constitution."

No wonder she divided mankind, for all purposes, into two classes:—"Either you were Family, or you were a person."

It is hardly necessary to consider the other characters in the book. The author expended his best powers upon the two women. Perfectly capable of painting a large canvass, with crowds of figures, he has here contented himself with the portraits of the heroine and her grandmother. Even the hero of the book is shadowy compared with what Mr. Hewlett could have done with the part had he desired. But it is precisely here that the author exercises an exceedingly clever trick in his artistry. Vernour wins Hermia Mary because to her he remains a more or less intangible, semi-mysterious figure, invested with a certain glamour. Vernour, with just the right instinct, leaves himself very largely to the imagination. So, too, Mr. Hewlett leaves the butcher very largely to the reader's imagination.

The reader is placed in the same category with Hermia Mary. He is forced to see Vernour very much as she did. By so doing, the love story becomes credible.

He understands the magic that worked upon the high-spirited girl. Only, having allowed it to work, Mr. Hewlett was not true to himself, not true to life, and not honest with his readers. There is really no excuse for the killing of Vernour, save the author's desire to get rid of him. His death did not spring from the necessities of the story. What one master of fiction wrote to another, is applicable here. Robert Louis Stevenson, writing on November 1, 1892 to Mr. J. M. Barrie penned, these wise words:

"If you are going to make a book end badly, it must end badly from the beginning. Now, your book began to end well. You let yourself fall in love with, and fondle, and smile at your puppets. Once you had done that, your honour was committed—at the cost of truth to life you were bound to save them. It is the blot on 'Richard Feverel,"for instance, that it begins to end well; and then tricks you and ends ill. But in this case, there is worse behind, for the ill ending does not inherently

issue from the plot— the story had, in fact, ended well after the great last interview between Richard and Lucy,—and the blind, illogical bullet which smashes all, has no more to do between the boards than a fly has to do with a room into whose open window it comes buzzing. It might have so happened; it needed not; and unless needs must, we have no right to pain our readers."

"The Stooping Lady" had ended well after that last great scene where Hermia Mary stood beside her lover who was fastened in the pillory; she thus proclaimed to all the world how her heart stood. The bullet which killed Vernour was quite as blind and illogical as the one which Stevenson denounced.

Commenting upon this book, its author once said: "It is good writing, but it is not good novel writing." Mr. Hewlett himself, to the contrary, and despite its ending, this novel is an entrancing little book concerning one of the most radiant girls in latter-day fiction.

THE SPANISH JADE.

IN the spring of 1908 there appeared a little volume—somewhat over the protest of its author, which might have been written ten years ago so far as its manner was concerned. It was thoroughly romantic and dealt with Spain, as formerly its author had dealt with Italy. In fact, it was a veritable "Little Novel of Spain.". Going back in time no later than 1860, it embodied its author's ideas of what Spain means, that "great, roomy, haggard country, half desert waste and half bare rocks * * * immemorially old, immutably the same, splendidly frank, acquainted with grief and sin; like some brown gipsy wench of the way-side, with throat and half her bosom bare, who would laugh and show her teeth, and be free with her jest; but if you touched her honour, ignorant that she had one, would stab you without ruth and go her free way leaving you carrion in the ditch."

This novelette gives the essence of all that he has seen in Spain, read in its literature,

perceived in its people, dreamed of its spirit. Just as brief trips in Italy gave him a firm grasp of the atmosphere of that country, so short vacation journeys in Spain gave him an insight into the temperament of the never-changing Iberian race. Just as he studied the plastic arts of Italy, so he studied the fine arts of Spain. Just as everywhere in Italy he took with him his Dante as guide, mentor and spiritual friend, so in Spain he took with him his Cervantes. He loves "Don Quixote," is full of it, quotes it. This book evidently inspired his travel to its scenes; evidently suggested the writing of a Spanish tale. It supplied him with one of the happiest touches in "The Spanish Jade."

"'I have here,' says his hero to the customs officer upon entering the town of Palencia, 'a shirt and a comb, the New Testament, the History of the Ingenious Gentleman, Don Quixote de la Mancha, and a tooth brush.' Much of this was Greek to the doganero, who, however, understood that the stranger was referring in tolerable Castilian to a provincial gentleman of degree."

Mr. Hewlett's little novel appeared from the presses about the same time as Mr. Havelock

Ellis' large volume, "The Soul of Spain." The reader finds quite as much of the soul of Spain in the one as in the other. In a way, it almost seemed as if the story were a complement to the more serious and more critical book. Almost everything that such a trained observer, traveler and critic as Mr. Ellis finds to say about Spain is also incorporated in the Hewlett book. What Mr. Ellis says about Spanish women is proved by Manuela; what he says about Spanish stoicism, the story bears out. Mr. Ellis calls attention to the fact that Spain is not another Italy, neither in its people, its scenery nor in its art and literature. He dwells upon the essential fixity of the Spanish character, upon the differences between the Catalans and the Aragonese, as if they were different peoples. Mr. Hewlett speaks of "the Spains and the nations which people them." Then he adds, carrying out the very thought of Mr. Ellis: "Behold the Castilian, the Valencian, the Murcian on his glebe, you find an exact relation established, the one exhales the other. The man is what his country is, tragic, hagridden, yet impassive, patient under the sun. He stands for the natural verities. You cannot change him,

move, nor hurt him. He can earn neither your praises nor your reproach. As well might you blame the staring noon of summer or throw a kind word to the everlasting hills. The bleak pride of the Castillano, the flint and steel of Aragon, the languor which veils its Andalusian fire—travelling the lands which gave them birth, you find them scored in large over mountain and plain and river-bed, and bitten deep into the hearts of the indwellers. They are as seasonable there as the flowers of waste places, and will charm you as much."

"The Spanish Jade" is touched and controlled somewhat by the spirit and traditions of Spanish literature. Even as in his romances of old time, Mr. Hewlett followed Chaucer and William Morris in their fondness for heroines with grey eyes, so in the present Spanish novelette, he has a heroine whose physical characteristics are those of the women of Spain's great books. She is a girl with tawny hair and sea-green eyes, this being the type that has always appealed to Spanish writers as the most beautiful and most aristocratic. But Mr. Hewlett has neither slavishly copied Spanish literature, nor

the popular type seen in the "Carmen" of Merimee and Bizet. It is true there is in this story a girl who is part gipsy, even as Carmen is, but in some ways she is more the real thing, her deeds seem more probable. Manuela is not solely a seductive beauty with a wild reckless heart filled with lustful passion, and with murderous hate when denied what she desires. Mr. Hewlett has not created another Carmen. He loves women. Loving, he also pities. It is not in his heart to depict any woman without some redeeming touches, without something that shows they are not entirely bad. In many ways this poor Manuela is a Spanish and unhappier Isoult la Desirous. Isoult went through troubles amany in a forest world of medieval times. She was surrounded on all sides by lustful men thirsting for her beauty. However, she was fortunate enough to be preserved from the fate these beasts of the chase willed for her. This was not so in the case of this Spanish Isoult, who, it is true, was of base birth where the heroine of "The Forest Lovers" was revealed in the end as a Countess. This girl of Spain in the sixties had never had a chance in life. She had never known a good human being. Mother,

unfrocked priest, wandering student,—all were evil and all saw in her only a pretty piece of merchandise. And Manuela was so well worth saving! She was so grateful for the small favour of an honest kiss and a wholesome word. She was so touched by a glimpse of a world where girls can remain clean. She was heroic with the proud heroism of her race. Loving Manvers for whose sake she committed murder, ready to be as wax in his hands, she must needs be honest with him and with herself; she must needs stand up in court and willingly say things about herself which she knows must reveal to him all of her pitiful, wretched story. It is not so much her beauty as her proud humility that wins for her the sympathy of the reader.

Some of the other characters are direct descendants of forebears in Spanish literature. There is Esteban Vincaz, the villain of the piece, a true picaresque character, a criminal and bully, with "the look of a seraph when he sang." Don Louis Ramonez de Alavia is also a familiar figure. He is, of course, thin, hollow-eyed and sallow; he is first cousin to the Archbishop of Toledo, is entitled to wear his hat in the presence of the Queen,—and lives

upon five pence a day! But the last of the important characters in the book is the author's own. Gil Perez, the hero's valet, speaks in dialect, a perilous undertaking for the author. The effort, on the whole, is successful.

The droll Spanish-English serves to bring out the fun of the character. Mr. Ellis says that Don Quixote and Sancho Panza still remain all there is of Spain. He says one can see the Quixotes and the Panzas on every high-road. If Don Luis has some of the attributes of the immortal Don, Gil is a blend of both characteristics. In serving his master he is as matter of fact, as literal, as faithful as ever Sancho was. In his wooing of Manuela, in the poetry it stirs up in his heart, he is kinsman of Quixote. He takes the foreground in the novel along with the "Jade" herself. It is he who provides for Manvers; he who finds Manuela when she has sought to disappear; he who loves her; he who saves Manvers' life and who provides for Manuela's future.

Osmund Manvers, the Englishman, who sets himself atilt against Spanish ways, is a stage Englishman. The author comments on his clean shirt, his extra change of linen, his

books ,but the truest touch is conveyed in a sentence. It is the very essence of the chivalry of the Protestant Englishman in Catholic Spain where woman is often considered a baggage and where parades in honor of the Virgin are so frequent. Manvers sees a band of ruffians abuse Manuela and there breaks from him this exclamation: "Damn him! I've a mind——.. And they pray to a woman!"

Notwithstanding this sign of real life, Manvers is somewhat wooden. He is too stolid. Caught up in a net of circumstances by his chance meeting with Manuela and twice saved by her from the assassin's bullet, he is blind to the love she bears him, bestows her upon Gil and goes his thoughtless way to England and its more prosaic life. Briefly and baldly outlined the story seems highly melodramatic and also tenuous. Told by Mr. Hewlett, it is an absorbing narrative giving the heady essence of all that is romantic and poetical, as well as savage and cruel, in Spain.

Mr. Arthur Symons gave it as his opinion that "Carmen" was the most Spanish thing since "Gil Blas." It is a strong temptation to add that the story of Manuela is the most Spanish thing since "Carmen."

HALFWAY HOUSE.

"HALFWAY HOUSE," which appeared in 1908, was a complete surprise to those friends of Mr. Hewlett to whom he had intimated that the novel was to be completly modern, completely different and completely shorn of all those things which have hitherto been put down as Hewlettian. In a way, it was his complete answer to the oft-repeated assertion that he could not present the life of people of today and that he could not work without the extraneous interest given a book by dint of casting its scenes in faraway eras and places. "Halfway House" was a surprise, not only because it dealt entirely with the England of the present time, but also because of its method. It is a light-hearted comedy all through,—albeit touched with the shimmer and glamour of romance, inevitable in a Hewlett book. Its people deal with the problems of today; they talk the speech of today; they are essentially modern.

As a matter of course, many reviewers pigeon-holed the book in its class and so breathed easier. They adjudged that Hewlett was now a confirmed Meredithian, that he had elected to follow the traditions fixed by the wizard of Box Hill, had chosen Meredithian themes and played with them in Meredithian manner.

Now that is not quite true. If to look upon life with smiling eyes; to tell stories with wit and humour; to garnish their telling with a style that has tricks and graces of its own be Meredithian, then is Mr. Hewlett a follower of the master so recently dead. But there are other things to be considered. Mr. Hewlett's style is not so dazzling and elliptical that it obscures, as so often happens in Meredith's novels. Futhermore, his characters do not constantly scintillate with wit and epigram any more than persons do in real life; and still furthermore, while Meredith's comedies, like Dickens' novels, are constantly freighted with some serious study of some grave problem of the day, Mr. Hewlett's two so-called Meredithian books,—"The Stooping Lady" and "Halfway House,"—have been stories pure and simple. No great life problem has been at-

tacked; no thesis of philosophy expounded. If there is any moral in the two books it is: "Don't seek to stoop to the person you love; don't seek to step out of your class; that way sorrow lies."

And Mr. Hewlett seems to enforce this moral, although in the two books he rather displays himself a radical who cares little for caste and has little sympathy with its prejudices. If he injects his own personality into the books at all, it is to sympathize with Hermia Mary for her fearless course in her love episode, and with Mary Middleham for the trials she had to face in the new circle of society to which her aristocratic husband introduced her.

But to go into these things is to take the book too seriously.

"Halfway House," should be considered purely as a book of comedy; a comedy in which Blackheath manners, morals, and ways of looking at life are contrasted with those of Mayfair; a comedy in which there is that funny scene where an aristocratic old lady condescends, only to be snubbed by a resident in Suburbia; a comedy in which life is seen as a play in which ridiculous, fortuitous

chances and accidents change and colour the whole of existence, making for happiness or the reverse; a comedy in which all little strivings and bickerings are food for ironic laughter, and in which humans appear to the eye of the beholder as dolls dressed up and smirking.

The main theme of the story is not new. Mr. Hewlett has not been prodigal in his invention. The plot has been often used. Whatever value it has is that it is presented from the Hewlettian standpoint. It is the individual touches he has put into it that count. The theme may best be happily and poetically indicated by this quotation which illustrates the dream of John Germain, a gentleman of fine landed estates in Berks. Here is how the man of fifty thinks of the maid of 24:

"The nymph Mero, let us say, was sought by the God Sylvanus, who wooed her in a well-watered vale. Or a young shepherdess —call her Marina—was the dear desire of Cratylus the mature, who offered her with touching diffidence, the well-found hearth, the stored garners, the cellar, for whose ripe antiquity (alas!) he himself could vouch. The maid was not cold; it was himself who doubted whether he were not frigid. He be-

sought her not to despise his silvering beard, the furrow in his brow. Boys, urged he, are hot and prone; but the wood-fire leaps and dies, while the steady glow of the well- pressed peats endures until the morning, and a little breath revives all its force. Thus Cratylus to Marina in his heart."

There was no grand passion here. There could not be. It was always a middle-aged man's dream of a home with its ruddy fire, its mistress with welcoming arms, its long, studious evenings. Having accomplished one kind of tale in "The Stooping Lady," there is here the reverse in the story of the stooping gentleman, of the middle-aged Cratylus who loves—after a fashion—and wins—after a fashion—his young Marina all dizzy with the honour conferred upon Blackheath by Mayfair, grateful for it, touched, able to give everything in return but the one thing needful, —Love! In "The Stooping Lady" the author resorted to the ancient expedient of killing the hero because he did not have the courage to allow his heroine to make the final stoop.

In "Halfway House" the stoop is accomplished. John Germain is always conscious of it, revels in it, takes an aesthetic de-

light in the beautiful picture of the modern King Cophetua and his beggar maid. His first wife had been of his own class, one very conscious of her beauty, seeking her pleasures where she might find them. When threatened by the disgrace of common scandal, the young Germain put on his mask to conceal his feelings, lived the man in the case out of England, faced every sorrow his wife might bring him, until death came to her as a blessed release to him. This kind of experience embittered him. He did not trust the women of his caste. So in time the now middle-aged poet came to dream of one who would some day sit beside his hearth, indebted to him for everything, grateful to him for everything. When he saw Mary Middleham, Mary of the hunted eyes, Mary in simple gown, he was convinced that here was the one destined to be the comfort of his declining years. He did not see that his love was a matter of intellectual choice; did not realize that his kisses lacked fire; did not understand how shocking it was to a young bride on her wedding day to have her husband discourse of long hours when she would go to school to him and learn French and Italian. In other words, the tragi-comedy

of John Germain's case was that he did not realize his incapacity for love. In his vision, the beggar maid remained always loyal and grateful to Cophetua. He did not foresee that in real life the things money could bestow upon Mary would soon be taken as a matter of course; that after a time she would not be so self conscious about the coronet of position he had placed upon her pretty head. And then what? Mary, become used to her new station,—by dint of her woman's adaptability and quick wit,—looks for more.

And the dream is done! Cophetua, now old before his time, sinks back into the comic-pathetic position of father to his wife. But not entirely. He has not the father's magnanimity. Rather, he has the husband's jealousy. Germain is a gentleman with a gentleman's fine instincts, but one corner of his brain has been warped by his earlier matrimonial experience. Long suffering and pain have made him dread a repetition of the buried past. Simple little actions on the part of his Mary, which if explained might have been smiled generously out of court, seem momentous to him; simple flirtations, due more to ignorance than design, cause fears in Mary

which he misinterprets. He buries his suspicions and his trouble deep within his breast; he assumes once more his coat of armour behind which to hide; but he never forgets, the result being that Turk-like, after death, he seeks to keep a chain upon his property—his wife—making an ungenerous will with caddish clauses in it that make his world stick tongue in check and leer with ironic eyes. And yet, John Germain was not a bad man. He was a good man as men go. In that high comedy, called life, his career and his nature had been twisted and distorted by fortuitous circumstances,—a pretty confession left unmade, a foolish telegram left undestroyed, a husbandly caress left unbestowed.

In the ordinary novel when man and wife are unhappy, there is the inevitable third person to make the inevitable triangle. This story has two such men, Duplessis, already mentioned, and John Senhouse. The novel's weakest point is Hewlett's handling of Duplessis. He does not convince the reader that so caddish a fellow could wield such an influence over Mary Germain. The ex-nursery governess had held her own with the best and most spiteful society of the county. It is therefore

hard to believe that Duplessis, by his insolence, could always make her feel her Blackheath origin, could take her into his arms and kiss her without as much as by-your-leave. The Mary who had grown in spiritual insight, would have left far behind the ungentlemanly gentleman of her early surreptitious flirtations.

Senhouse, who appeals at once to her heart and her mind, to her emotions and her imagination, wins the reader, too. Imagine a man who looks something like Robert Louis Stevenson, who wanders in strange lands and in his own England something after the manner of George Borrow, and who preaches epigramatic doctrine something like Mr. G. B. Shaw and you have Senhouse. A Cambridge scholar, who for the most part foregoes the society of the learned; a rich man's son, who scorns wealth and position; a painter and writer, who often lives on what he earns as a tinker; a gentleman vagabond, who scorns caste, and carries his belongings in a little cart; an enthusiastic botanist, who takes the tight little island as his garden; a real man, who is always a gentleman, Senhouse is the most fascinating character in the book, akin

somewhat to Mr. W. J. Locke's Paragot, but delightful and original nevertheless. He fascinates because the author has left things untold. As Mr. Hewlett once pointed out in considering Stendhal, it is precisely the things left out that appeal to the imagination. It is Senhouse who is Mary's good friend; it is he whose quiet talks compel her to be frank with her husband and to face the overweening Duplessis with something of courage; it is he, who in the final chapter of the book makes her come to him shyly and blushing, as meek virgin choosing the master whom she will gladly serve. For Mary is still the maid seeking a master. She will be humble when she finds him, clay for the potter's hands, to be moulded into what he will.

The development of her character, from the girlish dweller in Suburbia, casting down shy eyes before her "betters," to resident in Mayfair holding her own with the best of them, is cleverly demonstrated. Once the emptiness of the show is realized by her, she longs for freedom and the open sky, flowers and sun and rain, for the good companionship and the warm love of a true man, for the essentials of life rather than its superficialities and its luxuries.

She is willing, if she can find these things there, even to occupy a tent in Vagabondia.

It is at this point that the novel ends, with Senhouse calling and with Mary answering.

"Halfway House" is not a big novel in the sense that some of the great vital problems of modern life are illustrated and discussed. It is what it claims to be,—a "comedy of degrees." It is significant in its author's career because in many ways it seems to be the halfway house in his work. From this house, looking backward, the student can see the succession of romantic novels to his credit; the books in which he reverted to a past that lent itself to the purposes of the confirmed romanticist; the books which caused him to be described as a writer who opened a window, as it were, into the Renaissance era and allowed men to look through and see its great figures in the flesh—real breathing men and women, laughing and sorrowing, fighting and loving, brought to life by a magic of his own.

From this house, looking forward, the student —judging by the author's latest work—may only guess that Mr. Hewlett has done with the past and is going to concern himself henceforth with men and women of his own period.

OPEN COUNTRY.
THE RUINOUS FACE.

BACK of the stories Hewlett has invented, back of the style in which he has related them, there has always been that indefinable thing called 'personality." His books have been marked with an individual tang that belonged to him and to no other. In "Open Country" he quite frankly revels in his own ideas, in his own love for beautiful words and high sentiments. The book is not so much a novel as a spiritual autobiography. It is primarily a book of the spirit,—fictionally that of John Maxwell Senhouse the hero; actually that of Hewlett, the creator. He reveals himself as an individualist studying the problems and feeling himself in opposition to many of the beliefs of a complicated modern society.

He is found inserting the probe into institutions and establishments, and always in the true comic spirit. He is seen dropping the acid of a more or less subtle criticism upon the

veneer of modern civilization and showing what is underneath the somewhat polished and deceptive surface. But more than all this, Hewlett quite frankly displays himself as the beauty-intoxicated poet, revelling in outdoor England as a garden of delights, lovingly telling over the tale of its charm of hedgerows, woods and streams. He is still a romanticist, but one who is gradually orienting himself in the world about him, and who is bidding a final farewell to the gauds and the glories of medieval days. The high adventure of love, the reverent pondering upon God in His Heaven, the heart-tug of ever-recurrent beauty,—these things still appeal to him, but so do the more prosaic subjects of politics and property, socialism and anarchy. For, after all, Hewlett has not been able to escape his age. It has claimed him for its child. Its problems have finally obtruded themselves upon his notice and he is beginning to express his opinions about them.

"Open Country," the second of a trilogy dealing with the life, works and opinions of John Maxwell Senhouse, treats of a period prior to "Halfway House," is less frankly a story than that book, and depends less than

it upon mere plot. Indeed, in the newer volume Hewlett ranges himself quite plainly as a psychologist. The interest is not so much in what the main puppets do and say as in what they feel and think; in the transformation wrought upon their inner selves by the clash of their desires, beliefs, hopes, and class traditions. The mere story, as such, can be told in a paragraph. Senhouse has a chance meeting with Sanchia Percival, becomes her friend, comrade and instructor in many things, falls in love with her in somewhat shadowy fashion, and gives her up when he finds that she has conceived a passion for Nevile Ingram, already unhappily married to a woman of little character and less morals. It can be seen from this that the story is tenuous. But it is precisely this story, which, after all, is very possible, that is the occasion for the amazingly long letters which constitute the chief charm of the book. They form the complete clue to the soul of Senhouse, the dilettante tramp who has given up riches and society for the fun of planting exotic flowers in out-of-the-way- corners of England and for the adventures to be had on the winding white roads. Senhouse is more of a talker

and writer than he is a tinker or a painter. When interested, he is ready to pour out in conversation or in letters everything that he has felt or observed or dreamed or thought. Sanchia, whom with vision-blinded eyes he sees as a reincarnation of a Greek Goddess, whom he madly invokes as his Artemis the Bright, his Artemis Hymnia, is adored not so much as a woman but as the embodiment of his dream of virginal purity, all unconscious of her chastity and her charm. She inspires the best that is in him and he writes exquisite passages that read like poetry in solution. He opens to the girl's young and growing mind new and unexpected vistas, preaches the doctrine of the freedom of the individual, and proclaims that he has cut down all the barriers that hedged him about. The point of this "comedy with a sting" is that he finds in Sanchia too apt a pupil. Growing wise under his tutelage, she feels that his passion for her is not very deep, is not the kind in which there is love's last clear call.

He has convinced her that every man is honest and every woman good when in love. He has proclaimed that under present laws to offer woman marriage is to insult all that

is best and noblest in her. He beholds the girl as lovely and tells her so. He conceives her as saintly and desires her to be a saint. But by doing these things he robs himself of any chance of winning her, if he ever really desired to do so. He pushes her into the arms of another and that other not worthy of her. He is seen as the anarchist on the subject of marriage, pleading with Ingram to divorce his wife and marry the infatuated girl. Finally, last and most crushing irony of all, his pleading is of no avail, and Sanchia joins Ingram without benefit of clergy.

The main psychology of the piece is concerned with Senhouse. He is a most convincing and complete figure. In his mouth is placed the expression of the leading ideas, the ideas one feels sure are to recur in the future Hewlett novels. Briefly, these are a passionate devotion to a certain pantheistic conception of the God-principle; a romantically anarchic view about the laws of property and marriage; an intense feeling of the need for greater simplicity and temperance in living than is exhibited by men of this century.

To a certain extent, Senhouse is the preacher and expounder of the Hewlett propaganda.

Sanchia is a slighter figure. She is more passive than active. Her creator has established for her a certain physical charm, a certain innocence—or is it a divine ignorance?—a certain courage, but there is not revealed in the book quite the lure that she is supposed to have for the men who find her loveworthy. Her remarks are too often common-place. There is nothing of the Rosalind-quality, but there is at times a certain naivete, a certain piquancy and there is, as was to be expected in a novel of psychological tendencies, the unfolding of the gradual development of her heart and mind. The lesser characters, who serve to throw the main ones into clearer relief, are drawn with great skill. They are human and convincing, painted in Hewlett's best humourous manner.

On the whole, "Open Country" affords good entertainment. It is a book of beauty, with passages almost lyrical in their poetical intensity. It abounds in true feeling for youth and its golden passions. It has paeans in honour of nature and life in the open. It is a romantic comedy in which the author reveals himself once more as the possessor of a proper wit, with a power for social satire and humourous

dialogue that arises from a keen and true understanding of English castes. He gives his readers cause, between smiles, to stop for serious thought. For he is becoming a dissecter of souls, a searcher of hearts, a prober of minds, at the same time that he is exhibiting himself as a propagandist as distinctive in his way as Meredith and as romantically anarchistic as any man of his time. His goal is evidently the phychological novel of ideas—something radically different from his triumphs in the novels of romance and action. In "Open Country" he has taken a definite step towards his new goal.

"The Ruinous Face" lacks the romantic fervour of the usual Hewlett story. It has, rather, a sort of classic restraint, a calm almost severe style that is befitting in a tale of Helen of Troy. This piece of work is in essence a tragedy.

In Homer, of course, Helen is presented as the sufferer much more than as offender. The Greeks make war to avenge her wrongs as well as those of Menelaus. The chieftain regards her always as a person stolen from him and deems Paris a robber. Helen is drawn as a woman with refinement of charac-

ter and as one who is torn by homeward longings. There is no indication of her feeling a genuine passion or even affection for Paris. In contrast to the attitude toward Helen displayed by the later Greek tragedians, who represented her as a worthless woman, Homer, on the whole, speaks of her in laudatory epithets. In the regular story she goes home with Menelaus after the fall of Troy.

Hewlett has taken the Homeric conception of the honesty of Helen and a Rhodian tale of her suicide and builded out of these materials an entirely new legend. Helen is seen as the victim of her own great beauty. She is presented as the woman longing always for warm, human friendship, for the lover who is comrade also. She is one who day-dreams of home and children. But her dreams are always shattered. Her ruinous face, her perfect form call up the beast in men's eyes and hearts. Paris, Menelaus, even the slave who seemed to be her friendly servitor, all, all when the test comes prove lustful instead of truly loving. So that the woman, weary of her eternal shame at their hands, goes out into the garden and hangs herself. It is an absolutely original and poignant ending to an ancient story.

CONCLUSION.

THE Abbe Huet in 1678, in a discussion of the works of Mme. Lafayette, gave the following definition: "What are properly called romances are fictions of love adventures, written in prose with art, for the pleasure and instruction of readers."

As written over two centuries ago, this definition applies in the main to most of Mr. Hewlett's tales, whether they be little novels, historical chronicles or novels of manners. In the main they are true stories about love adventures,—"fond adventures," as Mr. Hewlett calls them.

His early romances are the kind of tales which take the road and put up at strange castles and crazy huts, rescue women in trouble, as often as not fall in with damsels in distress, who, when occasion requires, masquerade in boy's clothes like any Rosalind; they are books which have deeds of derring-do in battle and tournament and end with the love-crowned play of the hero and meek maid.

This is as one would expect. Mr. Hewlett's early reading was concerned with romantic authors. He was well versed in the lore of medieval Italy and in the fabliaux of old France. As a young man, he was a lecturer and reviewer on medieval topics. This fact not only influences his style and his choice of subject, but his manner of presenting his themes. Unlike the classic novelists of England, he does not dally by the way, indulging himself in disgressions, interpolations and reflections. Like some jongleur of old, whose audience was impatient to hear the finis of the tale, he takes up his narrative with the doings of his main characters and marches swiftly and bravely to the end. But he remains always the jongleur. It is for this reason that the I-tone is so prominent in his work. He is the teller of tales, establishing a direct relation between himself and you. He has fashioned this tale for your delight. And as he is primarily interested in tale-telling, it follows that he is not greatly concerned with the proving of theses.

Valera, the Spanish novelist, once wrote that it was bad taste, always impertinent and often pedantic to attempt to prove theses by

writing stories. According to this view, the "purpose novel" is so much the less a novel and so much the more a sermon. Mr. Hewlett's practice agrees with this dictum. Meredith—whose follower Hewlett is now accused of being—differs with Valera. His stories are thesis novels.

Of Meredith, Arthur Symons, one of the wisest of modern critics, said: "Writing prose then, as if it were poetry, with an endeavour to pack every phrase with imaginative meaning, every sentence, you realize will be an epigram. And as every sentence is to be an epigram, so every chapter is to be a crisis. And every book is to be at once a novel, realistic, a romance, a comedy of manners; it is to exist for its story, its characters, its philosophy and every interest is to be equally prominent. And all the characters in it are to live at full speed without a moment's repose; their very languors are to be fevers."

Mr. Hewlett, too, often writes prose as if it were poetry; his style is sometimes not enhanced, but marred by things derived from the practice of poets. But he avoids the Meredithian mistake of having all his people talk in epigram. Mr. Hewlett's more often than not

speak in character. They do not go about carelessly emitting brilliants. And, again, in the art of Mr. Hewlett not every chapter is a crisis. On the contrary, with rare exceptions, every chapter contributes to the general forward march of the tale. Like Meredith, his novels are at once realistic and romantic and comedies of manners, but they exist for the story and the characters, and are little concerned with philosophy. Meredith's designs have always been great, but his execution has not always been equal to the plans thus formed. Mr. Hewlett has been more modest in his designs and correspondingly more successful in his execution. He has not been concerned for originality of plot. Hence the frequent challenge of comparison with great names in literature. He has not scrupled to employ great historical figures and he has not hesitated to violate the law, seemingly made so absolute by Scott, that great historic figures must take a minor place in historical novels. In Mr. Hewlett's books the great historical figures are the main actors. It is the minor personages, invented by Mr. Hewlett, who throw light upon the springs of action that

supposedly determined the course of Richard and of Mary, Queen of Scots.

In "Buondelmonte's Saga," a reconstruction of an old Florentine event, he gives some insight into his method. Indeed, with a greater lack of reticence than usual, he permits a glance into his workshop: "As I do not think the worse of a tale because it may be true, so it is no detriment to it in my eyes that it has been pieced together from a hundred scraps—remnants, shavings, bits of brick and plaster, a sentence torn from a letter, a sharp saying passed into a proverb, the battered stump of an old tower, the memory (not gone yet) of wicked old hatreds or high young loves. One may assume, I take it, a certain decorum in the process. The raking and scraping, the groping and poring over rubbish heaps and rag-bags, should be done in decent darkness, where a man, in the company of the shaded candle, may shed tears without a shameful face; the work has its poignancy; the refashioned thing should not lack it either. What my own may want in this last particular I am not bound to discuss beforehand. I confess to the raking and scraping, to the shifting and piecing together, and

will own to a wet eye or so if you press me. No more. I hope that I have got the dust away, and that the old bones are none the worse for my galvanism. They were great flesh once."

Precisely! In these novels there is a touch of morbidezza which sometimes makes the reader feel that there is something unreal and strange, something that the author sets all his powers to overcome. And he does overcome it very largely by dint of the marvelous style with which he has clothed on his tales and also by dint of the fact that he is a master of atmosphere. He is always punctilious in the care with which he paints in his backgrounds. He gives the tone and temper of the times. He does not scruple to use plain words and to picture ugly deeds in getting his effects. He is not prudish; neither is he prurient. His men and women are veritable flesh, subject to its passions and its lusts, and in its gratifications they are often hurled down life's precipices.

Now what of the characters in these novels? Thomas Hardy smiles at Wessex folk, but he loves them too and depicts them and all their ways. Barrie often sheds tears with

Thrums' inhabitants, but he is content to reveal their humble comedies and tragedies. Kipling, in the main, deals with the Anglo-Indian and the subject races. Meredith and Mr. Hewlett are cosmopolitans, Mr. Hewlettt more so than the older man. Italy of the Renaissance and the post-Renaissance, France of the crusades, Scotland of Mary's day, England of George and of King Edward, these are the times and the lands that have occupied him.

For Mr. Hewlett youth is the age of ages; woman the sex. His few boys and girls are not the close studies given by Barrie, nor the marvelous ones of Meredith. His boys and girls are really not young, save in years. They are mature in knowledge, raised in the forcing-house of the hot Italian air for the most part, prematurely wise, prematurely witty, and gallant or sinful as the case may be. The typical Hewlett boy is Angioletto in "The Judgment of Borso," a youth well-equipped in all ways for life in the Italian courts. Mr. Hewlett's men are in the main, "galliards," young, hopeful, adventurous, pricking forth into the world, finding fights, wars, obstacles and—woman. They are gallant, they are roman-

tic and—the truth must be told—of a certain English stolidity which takes the sweet service of the gentler sex too much for granted. Prosper le Gai marries Isoult and forgets her until her constant service and her growing beauty force themselves upon his notice.

So with Francis Strelley and his Virginia. So, too, Osmund Manvers, in his wooden way, accepts the sacrifices of Manuela and bestows her upon his valet. Richard has something of this in his relations with Jehane, Bothwell with Mary.

Mr. Hewlett's art is an aristocratic art. It does not deal with "common" people save only as the most minor figures. His Isoult is discovered of noble birth. His Virginia's beauty is accounted for by her heritage from the Strozzi. As a necessary accompaniment of his romantic youths, are his swashbucklers, gamblers and adventures,—Cavaliere Acquamorta in "The Fool Errant," Brazenhead in the Canterbury tales, Mosca in "The Judgment of Borso."

Mr. Hewlett is mainly interested in his women. They are the pivots about whom his comedies and tragedies move. And his treatment of them differs from all the great

contemporary novelists. Kipling gives snapshot photographs of women. He shows them in certain brief moments of their existence, in vivid blacks and whites, caught on the instant whether the subjects were laughing or crying. Stevenson's few women are presented in silhouette. Barrie and Hardy give etchings in which line by line and with the most painstaking art, the features are drawn. But Meredith and Mr. Hewlett give paintings in which brush stroke after brush stroke has been used. The reader beholds the finished work, true not only in features, but in colouring.

In his great novels, Hardy has been obsessed with the half pagan idea of the inexorableness of things. His women are almost always the playthings of inscrutable, blind fate, caught up and often whirled to their doom. They do not dominate. "They are stray angels in bonds, who stand forever in mortal fear of losing their reputations. Social law is everywhere in conspiracy against their souls." He scarcely believes in good women and bad women. He sees only women affected by good or evil circumstances.

For Meredith, women are still creatures of the chase; but he pleads for a nobler sphere

of action for them; he mocks modern marital conditions; he would see woman uplifted, the comrade, not the plaything of man. He has nothing but contempt for women who are ignorant of or content with their subjection.

Now Mr. Hewlett is purely medieval. The Hewlett woman is forever the plaything of love. She is always in the attitude of the pursuing who is pursued. She is forever the subject of passion, holy or unholy. Men will fight for her, plunge kingdoms and cities in war or ruin for her, die for her. Sometimes, as in "The Stooping Lady," she is the willing object of this love and stoops to enjoy its divine benison; sometimes she flees from it when it displays a satyr face as in "The Duchess of Nona;" sometimes she is caught up in its tragic coil as in "The Queen's Quair," and destroyed by it. Hewlett's women, like Hardy's, are stray angels, but like Meredith's they are creatures of the chase. And, note the difference from Meredith!—this, according to the gospel of Mr. Hewlett, is as it should be.

Since it is woman's proper fate to be loved, it would seem to be impossible for Mr. Hewlett to write a story in which there is not some

romantic love interest. And in each case there is a stoop on the part of one. The stoop may be happy or the reverse, but it is there, He recurs to the idea again and again, but each time with a difference that prevents monotony.

In the main, Mr. Hewlett's women are good women. They are loyal and loving, ready alike to take beatings or kisses. There is no ice in their bosoms which must needs be thawed. Nor are Mr. Hewlett's women "kind" after the manner of the Stendhal characters. They are not women who make themselves common. For the most part, they are Rosalinds and Perditas of an humbler sort, with the beauty of those immortal girls, but without their supreme wit and high spirits. They are girls who are stricken down with love's dart and who make no effort to remove the dear missiles. They are true dwellers in romance-land, beautiful creatures who give themselves to their chosen lords without thought of sin or of the future.

But Mr. Hewlett is not only successful in depicting characters. He has wonderful descriptive powers. He fills his books with poetic allusions to wind and weather. He conveys

with wonderful skill any impression received through the so-called five senses. Alike in battle pieces and in calm pictures of an Italian dawn, he is convincing. It was for these reasons that Mr. Max Beerbohm, himself no mean user of English, wrote:

"For sheer artistry in the use of words, Mr. Hewlett beats anyone since Robert Louis Stevenson and Walter Pater."

Hewlett's masters in style have been Sir Thomas Browne, the Bible, Don Quixote in English, Mallory and Carlyle, with much culled, by the way, from Dante and the early Italians. He displays at times the gaudy splendor of Ruskin; he sounds the strident brass tones of Carlyle.

For the most part his style is swift in movement. It is not slow, subtle and insinuating. It does not bide its time. It leaps at the reader. It does not disdain to use words culled from the English provinces, from the Scotch, and from old books and plays. But whatever its sources, hold it up to the light, to adopt a phrase from Mr. A. B. Walkley, and this style displays the water mark of Mr. Hewlett. For, after taking away what he has learned from others, after deducting what is

conciously or unconciously reminiscent of his masters, there is something left that has the tang of the man's own personality, that makes the reader think of the author as a fact in back of his style.

Style can not be placed in the critical test tube and analyzed, any more than the chemist can fully explain the wonderful wizardry by which the rose produces its colour and perfume. The reader recognizes a certain colour and perfume of style, so to speak, which this man produces. It is so individual that it has sometimes produced the critical folly of speaking of it as "artificial style." Style, of course, in its very being is artifice. In a day marked by the scribbling of novels marred a hundred times by slip-shod English, the critics should rejoice when they find an artist who delights in fine English, who tries to play all the tunes of which the superb instrument is capable, who follows Pater's demands that writers should find time to use English more as a learned language.

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